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## National

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Rajasthan, Gujarat on February 28, 2026

Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi** undertook a significant day-long visit to **Rajasthan** and **Gujarat** to launch a nationwide healthcare initiative and inaugurate several high-value development and industrial projects.

#### Highlights of the Visit:

**Launch:** PM Narendra Modi launched the nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) **Vaccination Programme** in Kayad, Ajmer (Rajasthan) targeting girls aged 14 years across all States and Union Territories (UTs).

- The programme uses a single-dose **Gardasil 4** (quadrivalent HPV vaccine) protecting against HPV types 16, 18, 6, and 11.

**Inauguration:** He also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over **Rs 16,680 crore** in Rajasthan, spanning sectors including urban development, drinking water supply, roads, irrigation, energy, and industrial infrastructure.

**ATMP Facility:** PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the Semiconductor Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) facility of Micron Semiconductor Technology India Private Limited (MSTIPL) in Sanand, Gujarat.

- The Boise, United States of America (USA)-based Micron Technology invested Rs 22,516 crore in the Sanand facility.

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's visit to TN and Puducherry on March 1, 2026

Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi** visited Tamil Nadu (TN) and Union Territory (UT) **Puducherry** to inaugurate, dedicate to the nation, and lay foundation stones for multiple infrastructure and development projects worth over **Rs 7,100 crore**, with a focus on regional connectivity and public welfare.

**Infrastructure Projects:** PM Narendra Modi inaugurated, dedicated to the nation, and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects worth over **Rs 4,400 crore** in **Madurai, TN**, aimed at enhancing connectivity, improving mobility, and accelerating regional economic growth.

#### National Highway Projects:

- Marakkanam-Puducherry (NH-332A):** Four-laning project with an investment of over **Rs 2,100 crore**; expected to cut travel time by 50% and strengthen connectivity to Mamallapuram, Kalpakkam Atomic Power Station, and Auroville.
- Paramakudi-Ramanathapuram (NH-87):** Four-laning project with an investment of over **Rs 1,800 crore**; will reduce travel time by around 40 per cent and enhance access to Madurai, Rameswaram, Dhanushkodi, and Indian Naval Station (INS) Parundu.

**Outlay:** PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth over **Rs 2,700 crore** across infrastructure, education, health, mobility, and industrial sectors in Puducherry.

**India's First AI-Driven Skill Census 'Saksham' Launched in Mumbai, Maharashtra**

Ashish Shelar, Minister of Information Technology (IT) & Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra, formally launched 'Saksham Skill Census', India's 1st-of-its kind Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered skill census, at RD National College, Bandra West in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- The survey aims to evaluate the skills of youth aged **18–40 years** to improve their employability.

**About Saksham Skill Survey:**

**Conducted by:** As per the Maharashtra government, the survey will be conducted by **Sapio Analytics** over the next few months.

**Coverage:** The new survey is estimated to cover 55,000 houses in the H-West ward of Mumbai.

**Hyperlocal Skill Mapping:** The survey will use advanced AI technology and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, dividing areas into hyperlocal regions.

- Enumerators will conduct AI-based door-to-door surveys to study each candidate's educational qualification, skill interest and the need for necessary training for employment.

**Key Target:** The state government aims to train **15,000 candidates by 2027**, with 5,000 becoming self-reliant through jobs or entrepreneurship.

**VP CP Radhakrishnan Releases 16 publications on renowned Tamil scholars, heritage, architecture & culture**

Vice President (VP) Chandrapuram Ponnusami (C.P.) Radhakrishnan released **16 books** published by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) at Uparashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, Delhi.

- Of the total publications released, 14 are based on the Tamil language and remaining two are in Hindi (01) and English (01).

**Key Details of Publications:**

**Tamil Titles:** The publications include wide spectrum of Tamil titles such as: Rameswaram, a spiritual link between North and South India; Ramanujar, the life and philosophy of Sri Ramanuja; the historic Nadukal tradition; the ancient port town Arikaimedu, Bakthi Ilakkiyam, Iyarkai Velanmai, Pazhanthamizhan Isai Karuvigal, Tamizhaga Naattar Deivangal, Pudhiya Ariviyal Thozhilnutpangal, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple, Thanjavur Peruvudayar Koil, Manimegalai, and Mahavidwan Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai.

- The Tamil book on Rameswaram details the temple's sacred sites, architecture, sculptures, and deities, referencing the Puranas and literary sources.

**Book on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee:** VP also released a book on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, written by S.K. Bose, in 3 different languages i.e. in English, Hindi and Tamil.

- The book explores the life and times of Bankim Chandra and his exemplary contribution to the Indian literary movement.

**Overview of Canadian PM Mark Carney's visit to India from February 27 – March 2, 2026**

Mark Carney, Prime Minister (PM) of Canada, paid an official visit to India from 27th February to 2nd March 2026, at the invitation of PM Narendra Modi, marking his first official visit to India since his predecessor Justin Trudeau visited India in 2018 to attend the Group of Twenty (G-20) summit.

**Highlights of the Visit:**

**Visit to Mumbai, New Delhi:** On February 27, 2026, Canadian PM Mark Carney arrived in Mumbai (Maharashtra) to strengthen bilateral relations between India and Canada, with a focus on trade, energy, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

- PM Narendra Modi and PM Mark Carney held delegation-level talks on 2 March 2026 at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, Delhi.
- The leaders launched negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the release of Terms of Reference (ToR).

**Target:** India set a bilateral trade goal of USD 50 billion by 2030, focusing on sectors such as pharmaceuticals, iron and steel, seafood, cotton garments, electronics, chemicals, pulses, coal, fertilizers, paper, and crude petroleum.

**MoUs:** Several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were exchanged between India and Canada across sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), healthcare, agriculture, innovation, education, and culture.

**MoD Signs Rs 5,083 crore Contracts for ALH Mk-III (MR) and VL-Shtil Missiles**

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed defence procurement contracts worth **Rs.5,083 crore** for the acquisition of Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Surface-to-Air Vertical Launch (VL) – Shtil missile systems for the Indian Navy (IN).

- The contracts were signed in the presence of Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, MoD at South Block, New Delhi, Delhi.

**Key Details of Contract:**

**ALH Mk-III (Maritime Role) Helicopters:** The MoD signed a contract worth **Rs.2,901 crore** with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the procurement of **six** Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role), including operational role equipment, engineering support package, and performance-based logistics support, for the ICG.

**Surface-to-Air VL– Shtil Missiles:** The MoD also signed a contract worth **Rs.2,182 crore** with **JSC Rosoboronexport, Russian Federation** for the procurement of Surface-to-Air VL – Shtil missiles along with associated missile holding frames for the IN.

**Union Minister Amit Shah Launches 4 Digital tools and mascots 'Pragati' & 'Vikas' for Census-2027 in New Delhi**

Union Minister Amit Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), soft-launched four digital tools and formally unveiled the mascots “Pragati” (female) and “Vikas” (male) for Census-2027 in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The event marks a key milestone in preparations for India's first fully digital census.

**Launch of Mascots and Digital Tools:**

**Mascots:** The mascots Pragati and Vikas represent the equal participation of women and men in achieving India's national mission of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

**Digital Tools:** The four newly launched soft digital tools: Houselisting Block Creator (HLBC) Web Application(app), House Listing Officer (HLO) Mobile App, Self-Enumeration (SE) Portal, and Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) Portal, are designed to facilitate and streamline enumeration operations throughout India.

- They have been developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), the premier R&D organization under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

**Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Lays Foundation Stone for India's First Riverine Lighthouses in Guwahati, Assam**

Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal**, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), laid the foundation stones for **four riverine lighthouses** along the banks of the **Brahmaputra River** in Assam, marking the **first lighthouse infrastructure** on an inland waterway in India, with a total project outlay of approximately **Rs 84 crore**.

- The ceremony was held at Lachit Ghat in Guwahati, Assam, and was jointly organised by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) and the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) under the aegis of MoPSW.

**About Brahmaputra River Lighthouses Project:**

**Sites:** Four river lighthouses will be developed at **Bogibeel** (Dibrugarh district, Assam), **Pandu** (Kamrup Metro district, Assam), **Silghat** (Nagaon district, Assam), and **Biswanath** Ghat (Biswanath district, Assam) along the Brahmaputra on National Waterway-2 (NW-2).

**Specifications:** Each lighthouse will be **20 metres (m)** high with a geographical range of 14 nautical miles and a luminous range of 8–10 nautical miles, powered entirely by solar energy.

**Tourism:** Each site will include facilities such as a museum, amphitheatre, cafeteria, children's play area, souvenir shop, and landscaped public spaces to promote tourism.

**Union MoS Jitendra Singh Reviews India's First Integrated Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Plant in Lakshadweep**

Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) **Jitendra Singh**, Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), reviewed the progress of **India's first** Integrated Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) plant being developed in **Kavaratti, Lakshadweep**.

- During the visit, Union MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh reviewed the physical and technical progress of the plant and examined key components such as the seawater intake system, the deep-sea cold-water pipeline, the turbine-generator unit and the desalination modules.

**About first Integrated OTEC plant:**

**Technology:** The OTEC utilises the temperature difference between warm surface seawater and

could deep seawater to generate electricity.

**Scope:** The project is expected to provide clean power, desalinated drinking water, and sustainable energy solutions for island communities where conventional power supply is limited.

**Implementing Agencies:** The OTEC project is being developed with the support of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), an autonomous institute under MoES headquartered in Chennai, Tamil Nadu(TN).

### **Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis Presents Rs.7.69 Lakh Crore Budget for FY27**

Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister (CM) of Maharashtra, presented the State Budget for Financial Year 2026–27 (**FY27**) with a total outlay of **Rs.7,69,467 crore** in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The budget outlines major welfare schemes, infrastructure investments, and fiscal targets while maintaining a fiscal deficit of 2.7 percent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

- The budget aligns with the **Viksit Bharat** roadmap and is based on four pillars: progressive development, sustainability, inclusiveness, and good governance. It also sets a long-term vision of transforming Maharashtra into a USD 1 trillion economy in the coming years and USD 5 trillion by 2047.

#### **Highlights of the Budget:**

**Financial Indicators:** The budget proposed a capital outlay of Rs.1,12,816 crore for FY27 to push infrastructure development.

- The Fiscal Deficit is pegged at Rs.1,50,491 crore (2.7% of Gross State Domestic Product, GSDP), while the Revenue Deficit is estimated at Rs.40,552 crore (below 1% of GSDP).

**Key Allocations:** A significant portion of the budget, around **Rs.60,000 crore**, is allocated to three flagship welfare programmes.

- A major highlight of the budget is the Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar Farmers' Loan Waiver Scheme, under which **crop loans up to Rs 2 lakh** per farmer outstanding as of 3 September 2025 will be **waived**.
- The state government also declared **FY27** as the “**Year of Social Equality and Harmony**” to commemorate anniversaries of social reformers Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Sant Gadge Baba, and Dr B R Ambedkar.

### **Overview of Finland President Alexander Stubb's visit to India from March 4-7, 2026**

The President of Finland, **Alexander Stubb**, paid a four-day State Visit to India from **4-7 March 2026** at the invitation of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, accompanied by a high-level delegation, to strengthen cooperation in digitalisation, sustainability, innovation, and trade, resulting in the elevation of bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership for Digitalisation and Sustainability.

- The visit elevated bilateral ties and marked Alexander Stubb's first visit to India in his current capacity.

**Highlights of the Visit:**

**Meetings:** PM Narendra Modi and President Alexander Stubb held bilateral discussions to strengthen cooperation in trade, innovation, digital technologies, sustainability and multilateral forums.

- President Stubb met President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President (VP) Chandrapuram Ponnusami (C. P.) Radhakrishnan, and Union Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) during his visit to India.

**Raisina Dialogue:** The theme of Raisina Dialogue 2026 was “Samskara – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement.”

- President Alexander Stubb attended the 11th Raisina Dialogue 2026 in New Delhi (Delhi) as the Chief Guest and keynote speaker.

**Partnership:** India and Finland elevated their bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership for Innovation and Sustainability, focusing on Digital Technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Computing, Green Hydrogen and 6G Technology.

**Uttarakhand Ranks First Nationally in Effective Implementation of New Criminal Laws and ICJS 2.0**

Uttarakhand secured the first position in India in the implementation of the Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) 2.0, scoring **93.46** on the latest ICJS/Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) Progress Dashboard released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) with data up to January 2026.

- Haryana ranked second (93.41), followed by Assam (93.16), Sikkim (91.82), and Madhya Pradesh (MP) (90.55).

**About CCTNS/ICJS Progress Dashboard:**

**Implementation of New Criminal Laws:** The achievement of Uttarakhand is largely attributed to the leadership of Chief Minister (CM) Pushkar Singh Dhami, who closely monitored the implementation of the three new criminal laws in India: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) across the state.

**Digitalisation:** Under ICJS 2.0, Uttarakhand implemented the ‘One Data, One Entry’ mechanism, enabling seamless data sharing among Police (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems – CCTNS), Courts (e-Courts), Jails (e-Prisons), Prosecution (e-Prosecution), and Forensic Labs (e-Forensics).

**GoI sets up 17-member committee for larger reforms in SEZ policy**

The Government of India (GoI) constituted a **17-member committee** to suggest larger reforms in the policy for Special Economic Zones (SEZs), as policymakers seek to revive exports amid global trade uncertainty.

**About 17-member committee:**

**Composition:** The committee consists of representatives from Commerce and customs department, National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), Directorate General of Export Promotion (DGEP), export promotion council for SEZs, two

development commissioners, and Department of Economic Affairs (DoEA).  
**Timeline:** The committee will submit a concept paper within **six months** along with its recommendations for broad-based and comprehensive reforms to formulate a **SEZ 2.0 policy**.  
**Study:** For this purpose, the panel will undertake a background study to review the integration of existing export promotion schemes with SEZs.

### ISRO and ESA Sign Agreement to Strengthen Cooperation in Earth Observation Missions

The Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) and the European Space Agency (**ESA**) virtually signed a new agreement titled “ESA–ISRO Arrangement concerning Joint Calibration and Validation Activities and Scientific Studies for Earth Observation Missions”, to improve **the accuracy and reliability of satellite data** used for climate monitoring, environmental research and Earth science.

- The agreement was signed by **M. Ganesh Pillai**, Scientific Secretary of ISRO, and **Simonetta Cheli**, Director of Earth Observation Programmes at ESA.

#### Key Details of Agreement:

**Background:** The ISRO–ESA partnership, which began in 1978 and was renewed in 2002, has expanded to areas such as Earth observation, navigation systems, ground station support, human spaceflight, Chandrayaan and Aditya missions, and deep-space communications.

**Impact:** The collaboration will contribute significantly to global **climate monitoring**, environmental research, and disaster management by providing more actionable and precise data.

**Key Mission:** The agreement specifically supports the upcoming Fluorescence Explorer (**FLEX**) mission, an ESA Earth Explorer satellite designed to monitor global vegetation health by measuring chlorophyll fluorescence.

### Cabinet Approvals on March 10, 2026: Major Infrastructure and Transport Projects Across India

In March 2026, the **Union Cabinet** chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved several major infrastructure projects, including granting international airport status to **Madurai Airport** (Tamil Nadu, TN); Rs. 4,474 crore **railway multitracking projects** in West Bengal (WB) and Jharkhand, a Rs. 3,631 crore **road project** in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (UP), and a Rs. 3,839 crore highway widening project in Madhya Pradesh (MP).

- The projects, approved under the Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti National Master Plan (**PMGS-NMP**), are intended to advance regional connectivity, streamline logistics, and foster economic development across India.

#### Key Details of Approvals:

**Approval 1:** The Union Cabinet approved the declaration of Madurai Airport in Tamil Nadu (TN) as an International Airport.

**Approval 2:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved two Indian Railways (IR) multitracking projects worth **Rs 4,474 crore**.

- The projects span five districts across WB and Jharkhand, expanding the IRs network by about 192 kilometres (km).

**Approval 3:** The CCEA approved the revised capital cost of **Rs 3,630.77 crore** for constructing Greenfield road connectivity to Noida International Airport, commonly known as Jewar International Airport, UP.

**Approval 4:** CCEA approved a **Rs 3,839.42 crore** project for four-laning the Badnawar–Petlawad–Thandla–Timarwani section of National Highway-752D (NH-752D) in MP.

### Union Minister Rajnath Singh Releases 'Defence Forces Vision 2047' Roadmap for Future-Ready Indian Military

Union Minister **Rajnath Singh**, Ministry of Defence (MoD), released the vision document titled “**Defence Forces Vision 2047: A Roadmap for a Future-Ready Indian Military**” at South Block, New Delhi (Delhi).

#### Overview of the Vision:

**Prepared by:** The document, prepared by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (**HQ IDS**).

**Objective:** The roadmap outlines a long-term strategy to transform the Indian Armed Forces into a modern, integrated, technologically advanced and multi-domain military capable of deterring adversaries and responding effectively to the full spectrum of conflicts by **2047**.

**Jointness:** The document emphasises stronger coordination among the Indian Army (IA), Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF) in planning, operations and capability development.

**Technology:** It promotes adoption of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyber defence systems and modern training frameworks for future warfare.

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's Visit to Kerala, TN on March 11, 2026

Prime Minister (**PM**) **Narendra Modi** visited **Ernakulam (Kerala)** and **Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu, TN)**, where he inaugurated, dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation stone for multiple development projects worth **around Rs 16,450 crore** across sectors such as petroleum and natural gas infrastructure, highways, rural connectivity and railways.

#### Highlights of the Visit:

**Kerala:** During the visit to Ernakulam, Kerala, PM Narendra Modi inaugurated, dedicated to the nation, laid foundation stones and flagged off multiple development projects worth around **Rs 10,800 crore**.

- He laid the foundation stone for a Polypropylene Unit at the Kochi Refinery of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) with an investment of over Rs 5,500 crore and a capacity of 400 Kilo Tons Per Annum (KTPA) to boost domestic polymer production and reduce import dependence.

**TN:** During the visit to Tiruchirappalli (TN), PM Modi inaugurated, dedicated to the nation and laid foundation stones for development projects worth about **Rs 5,650 crore** across petroleum, infrastructure, rural connectivity and railway sectors.

The foundation stone was laid for the City Gas Distribution Network (CGD) of BPCL in The Nilgiris and Erode districts with an investment of over Rs 3,680 crore, which will provide Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections to over 8.8 lakh households, supply gas to 200+ commercial establishments, and establish 201 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations.

### Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh Launches Bharat Tex 2026

Union Minister **Giriraj Singh**, Ministry of Textiles (MoT), launched **Bharat Tex 2026**, India's flagship global textile event, expected to become one of the world's largest integrated textile fairs, aimed at positioning India as a reliable sourcing destination and investment hub for the global textile industry.

#### **Overview of Bharat Tex 2026:**

**Event:** Bharat Tex 2026 will be held from **July 14 to 17, 2026** at Bharat Mandapam, **New Delhi** (Delhi).

**Organiser:** The event is organised by the Bharat Tex Trade Federation (BTTF), an umbrella body of 11 textile-related Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and industry organisations, with support from MoT.

**Vision Alignment:** The event supports the Prime Minister's (PM) 5F Vision—Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion, and Fashion to Foreign markets, under the Make in India, aiming to strengthen the entire textile value chain from raw material production to global exports.

#### **NITI Aayog Releases Fiscal Health Index 2026; Odisha Ranks First**

Suman Bery, Vice-Chairman of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), and **Nidhi Chhibber**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO, Additional Charge) of NITI Aayog, released the **second annual edition** of the "Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026" in New Delhi, Delhi.

- FHI 2026 evaluates the fiscal performance and financial soundness of Indian states for the Financial Year 2023-24 (**FY24**), based on data from the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (**CAG**).
- Odisha secured the top rank with an FHI score of 73.1, followed by Goa (54.7) and Jharkhand (50.5).

#### **Performance of Major States:**

**Front-Runners:** The Front-Runner category includes Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Karnataka.

**Performers:** Madhya Pradesh (MP), Haryana, Bihar, Tamil Nadu (TN) and Rajasthan fall under the Performer category, reflecting moderate fiscal management with scope for improvement.

**Aspirational:** West Bengal (WB), Kerala, Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Punjab are placed in the Aspirational category, characterised by higher fiscal deficits, elevated debt levels (35–45 percent of GSDP), and large committed expenditures.

#### **RBI Authorises CRED To Operate as Payment Aggregator**

The Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) granted authorisation to CRED, a fintech platform operated by Dreamplug Technologies Private Limited, to operate as Payment Aggregator (**PA**), under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act (PSSA), 2007.

- This approval will help the company in expanding its role in India's digital payments ecosystem.

#### **About the Authorisation:**

**Function:** This authorisation will enable the company to onboard merchants directly and manage payment flows without depending on intermediaries or partner banks.

**PPI License:** Following this approval, the CRED and its subsidiaries now hold two key RBI licenses, including a license to operate as Prepaid Payment Instrument (**PPI**).

**Other Key Licenses:** The company also holds a corporate agency licence from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI); Registered investment adviser licence from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI); and Third-party application provider (TPAP) license from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

### GoI Adds 7 Districts in 6th Phase of Mandatory Gold Hallmarking

The Government of India (GoI) implemented the sixth phase (**Phase VI**) of the **mandatory hallmarking of Gold Jewellery and Gold Artefacts (Amendment) Order, 2026**, adding **seven more districts** under the Bureau of Indian Standards (**BIS**) hallmarking regime to ensure the purity of gold jewellery and strengthen consumer protection, effective from 2 March 2026.

- The seven districts are Rupnagar (Punjab), Banda (Uttar Pradesh, UP), Beed (Maharashtra), Gomati (Tripura), Katihar (Bihar), Beawar (Rajasthan), and Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh, MP).

### About Mandatory Gold Hallmarking:

**Overview:** Mandatory gold hallmarking is a quality certification system implemented by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to ensure the purity and authenticity of gold jewellery and artefacts sold in India.

**Implementation:** Mandatory gold hallmarking has been implemented in a phased manner since **June 2021**.

- Phase I (23 June 2021) covering 256 districts, Phase II (4 April 2022) expanding to 288, Phase III (8 September 2023) to 343, Phase IV (5 November 2024) to 361, Phase V (31 July 2025) to 373, and Phase VI (2 March 2026) to **380 districts**.

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's Visit to Assam & WB on March 13-14, 2026

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi visited Assam and West Bengal (WB) from 13–14 March 2026, where he inaugurated projects, dedicated infrastructure to the nation, and laid foundation stones including Bhoomi Poojan for multiple development projects worth over **Rs. 66,280 crore**, with Rs. 47,600 crore in Assam and Rs. 18,680 crore in WB.

### Highlights of the Visit:

**Visit to Assam:** PM Narendra Modi launched, inaugurated, dedicated and laid the foundation stone for multiple infrastructure, energy, railway, waterways, welfare and education projects worth **Rs 47,600 crore** across **Kokrajhar** (Assam), **Guwahati** (Assam) and **Silchar** (Assam).

- Bhoomi Poojan was performed for **Assam Mala 3.0 (AM 3.0)**, a road infrastructure programme worth Rs 3,200 crore that will construct over 900 kilometres (km) of roads across 34 districts and include 37 bridges to strengthen inter-state connectivity.

**Visit to WB:** Development projects worth around Rs 18,680 crore covering road infrastructure, ports and railways were inaugurated in Kolkata (WB).

National Highway (NH) projects with a combined length of over 420 km worth about Rs 16,990 crore were inaugurated and launched to improve connectivity and road safety.

### Sagar Defence Lays Foundation of World's First Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding Centre in AP

Sagar Defence Engineering Private Limited, a defence technology company, laid the foundation stone for the **world's first Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre** at Juvvaladinne Fishing Harbour, Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

#### About World's First Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding Centre:

**Advanced Shipyard:** The proposed Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding Centre will operate as an advanced shipyard integrating robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) into key production processes to improve shipbuilding efficiency, workforce productivity, and sustainability.

**Integrated Facilities:** The centre will house autonomous shipbuilding units, testing infrastructure, a Research and Development (**R&D**) centre, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (**MRO**) facilities, and a specialised training hub within a single integrated campus.

**Technologies:** The shipyard will adopt **smart manufacturing technologies**, including robotic fabrication systems for welding, cutting, painting, and assembly, along with automated guided vehicles and additive manufacturing (3D printing) for rapid production of specialised components.

### New Plant Species 'Osbeckia zubeengargiana' Discovered in Manas NP, Named After Zubeen Garg

Researchers from Gauhati University discovered a new plant species, **Osbeckia zubeengargiana**, in the grassland ecosystems of Manas National Park (NP), a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site, in Assam.

- The species was named after Assamese music icon Zubeen Garg, and the discovery was published in the scientific journal *Phytotaxa*.

#### About **Osbeckia zubeengargiana**:

**Research Work:** It was documented during floristic surveys conducted between 2021 and 2025, in Baksa district (Assam).

**Genus Family:** The newly identified species, *Osbeckia zubeengargiana*, belongs to the **Melastomataceae family**.

**Key Features:** The species exhibits similarities with *Osbeckia rostrata* but differs in several morphological traits like: leaf structure, flower arrangement, hypanthium shape and seed size.

- The researchers described the new plant species as a perennial erect shrub that can grow a maximum 3.5 metres (m) in height and produces distinctive pink tetramerous flowers.
- The plant typically flowers and bears fruit between mid-September and January.

**Significance:** The discovery enriches the botanical diversity of Assam and contributes to scientific knowledge of the genus *Osbeckia*, which is widely distributed across Southeast Asia including several endemic species in Eastern Himalayas and the Western Ghats.

### India Post Launched '24 Speed Post' with Next-Day Delivery from March 17, 2026 in Six Cities

The Department of Posts (**DoP**) also known as **India Post**, under the Ministry of Communications, launched the '**24 Speed Post**' premium express service to provide next-day (D+1) guaranteed delivery for urgent and time-sensitive consignments across **six major cities** in its initial phase, with regulations effective from **17 March 2026**.

- In the first phase, the service covers six metro cities—**New Delhi** (Delhi), **Mumbai** (Maharashtra), **Chennai** (Tamil Nadu, TN), **Kolkata** (West Bengal, WB), **Bengaluru** (Karnataka) and **Hyderabad** (Telangana).

#### About India Post '24 Speed Post' Services:

**Services:** The services offered include '24 Speed Post' (D+1) for next-day document delivery, '48 Speed Post' (D+2) for two-day document delivery, and '24 Speed Post Parcel' (D+1) for next-day parcel delivery up to 5 kilogram (kg).

**Technology:** The service uses dedicated processing windows and priority air transmission supported by digital logistics systems.

**Features:** Key features include One-Time Password (OTP)-based secure delivery, end-to-end tracking with Short Message Service (SMS) alerts, Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), Application Programming Interface (API) integration, free bulk pickup and money-back guarantee.

#### Gujarat Achieves Milestone with First Sounding Rocket Launch at Dholera

**Gujarat** achieved a major milestone in the space sector with the successful launch of its **first sounding rocket** at Bavaliyari village near **Dholera**, Gujarat, marking the state's entry into India's growing private space technology ecosystem.

#### Key Details of Launch:

**Conducting Agency:** The test was carried out by Ahmedabad-based startup Omspace Rocket and Exploration Private Limited (**OSRE**).

**Launch & Performance:** The single-stage sub-orbital rocket was launched from a temporary facility and successfully reached an altitude of nearly 3 kilometres(km).

**Payload:** The rocket carried a mini-satellite for weather data collection and was built using carbon fibre and advanced composites under the Make in India initiative.

**Policy Support & Approval:** The launch was carried out with approval from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) and supported by the Gujarat Spacetech Policy 2025–2030.

#### NIPL Expands UPI Merchant Acceptance in Sri Lanka

NPCI International Payments Limited (**NIPL**), the global arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), expanded the acceptance of India's Unified Payments Interface (**UPI**) across merchant establishments in **Sri Lanka**.

#### Key Details of Expansion:

**Objective:** The initiative aims to improve cross-border payment experiences for Indian tourists and further strengthen the longstanding economic and cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka.

**UPI Payments:** This new initiative will enable Indian tourists to make real-time account-to-account payments by scanning **Lanka Quick Response (QR) codes** through their preferred UPI-enabled mobile applications (apps).

**Merchant-specific Benefits:** This initiative will help the merchants to expand its reach to a large, digitally savvy customer; enhances cash management, reduces reliance on physical cash and improves operational efficiency.

**UPI Dominance:** UPI processes more than 20 billion monthly financial transactions and has over 700 million UPI QR touch points across India.

**Global Reach of UPI:** It is now operational in more than eight countries, including the United Arab Emirates(UAE), Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar.

**GSI Declares Kalinjar Fort Hill in UP as National Geo-Heritage Site**

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) declared the **hill area surrounding Kalinjar Fort** in Banda district, Uttar Pradesh(UP) as a **National Geo-Heritage Site**, recognising its unique geological and historical significance.

**About Kalinjar Fort Hill:**

**Inauguration:** The site was inaugurated by **Rajinder Kumar**, Additional Director General(DG) and Head of GSI's Northern Region.

**Geological Significance:** The site is home to a rare geological phenomenon known as the **Eparchaean Unconformity**. This formation represents a massive temporal gap of approximately 1.3 billion years in the Earth's geological record.

- The hill exposes **Bundelkhand granite**, which is nearly 2.5 billion years old, directly overlain by Kaimur sandstone, aged approximately 1.2 billion years. This sequence offers critical insights into the crustal evolution of the Vindhya Mountain range.
- Kalinjar Fort is known for temples from the Gupta period, including
- the **NeelkanthMahadev Temple**.

**Metropolis by Reliance MET City Becomes India's First Project to Get LEED Platinum Pre-Certification**

Metropolis, the flagship commercial project of Reliance MET City in Jhajjar(Haryana), became the **first project in India** to receive, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (**LEED**) **Platinum Pre-Certification** under the LEED for Cities: Plan and Design rating system, the highest rating, awarded by Green Business Certification Inc.(GBCI).

**About LEED Certification:**

**Significance:** The Platinum pre-certification places the project among globally recognized sustainable urban developments.

**Framework:** The LEED certification, developed by the United States of America (U.S.A) Green Building Council (**USGBC**), evaluates sustainability across ecology, transport, energy, water, resources, and quality of life.

**Objective:** LEED for Cities: Plan and Design (LEED-Cities P&D) integrates sustainability and climate resilience at the planning stage while providing a roadmap for resource efficiency and reduced environmental impact.

**GoI launches RELIEF scheme to support Indian exporters amid West Asia conflict**

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (**MoC&I**) announced the launch of a new initiative, Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (**RELIEF**) scheme to support Indian exporters impacted by the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

**Key Highlights**

**Purpose:** The RELIEF initiative is a time-bound and targeted measure aimed at mitigating the impact of rising logistics costs, higher insurance premiums, and war-related risks affecting export consignments moving to or through the Gulf region.

**Financial Outlay:** The scheme will be implemented with a financial outlay of **Rs 497 crore** (Cr) under the Export Promotion Mission (**EPM**).

- A dashboard-based monitoring system will be introduced to track claims and fund utilisation in real time.

**Implementing Agency:** The **ECGC Ltd.** (Formerly Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd.), wholly owned by Government of India (**GoI**), has been designated as the nodal and implementing agency responsible for verification, claim processing, disbursement and monitoring.

### **NIRYAT Data for FY25: TN Becomes Top Textile Exporter**

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I) released the National-Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of Trade (**NIRYAT**) data for the Financial Year 2024-25(FY25).

- As per the report, Tamil Nadu (**TN**) has emerged as India's top state in textile exports, registered exports worth **USD 7,997.17 million**(21.84% of India's overall exports).

#### **Key Findings:**

**Total Value of Exports:** The data further revealed that the total value of India's textile export stood at **USD 36,610 million** in FY25.

**Other Top States:** TN is followed by Gujarat which secured the 2nd rank with exports USD 5,646.01 million; Maharashtra at USD 3,831.28 million.

**About NIRYAT:** It is a dedicated platform launched by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi in 2022, providing real-time comprehensive data on foreign trade.

### **BPCL Launches India's 1st LPG ATM in Gurugram, Haryana**

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (**BPCL**), a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG), launched **India's 1st** Liquefied Petroleum Gas (**LPG**) Automated Teller Machine (**ATM**) at Central Park Flower Valley in Sector 33, Sohna, in **Gurugram, Haryana**.

- The launch was part of BPCL's pilot project branded as '**Bharat Gas Insta LPG**', which aims to test automated gas distribution in urban areas of the country.

#### **About India's 1st LPG ATM:**

**Objective:** It is designed to provide quick, safe, and round-the-clock access to LPG, particularly during global supply shortages amid West Asia war crises.

**Digital Process:** Registered BharatGas customers are required to enter their registered mobile number, verify it via One Time Password (OTP), and scan the barcode or Quick Response (QR) code on their empty cylinder and complete the payment process digitally through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) or debit card.

**Cylinder Type:**The LPG ATM offers lightweight composite cylinder weighing about 15 kilogram (kg) compared to the conventional iron cylinders which weigh nearly 31 kg.

**Capacity:** The newly launched LPG ATM has the capacity to hold a maximum of 10 cylinders. When stock falls below two cylinders, the nearest gas agency will get an alert to replenish the machine.

**IA Conducts Exercise 'AmoghJwala' at Babina Field Firing Ranges, UP**

The **Southern Command** of Indian Army (IA) successfully conducted Exercise 'Amogh Jwala' from March 6 to 18, 2026 at the Babina Field Firing Ranges in Uttar Pradesh (UP).

- The 13-day long military exercise aimed to validate the IA's preparedness for mechanised warfare in a multi-domain operational environment.

**About****AmoghJwala:**

**Key Achievement:** The key highlight of the exercise was the successful demonstration of the deployment of mechanised forces with newly inducted **Apache attack** helicopters, fighter aircraft, drone and counter-drone systems and network-enabled battlefield platforms.

**Key Technologies Used:** The drill used the advanced surveillance systems, precision firepower and real-time communication networks to enhance battlefield transparency and enhanced decision-making.

**Integration of Advanced Technologies:** The exercise highlighted the effective integration of Electronic Warfare (EW), Air Defence (AD) and night-fighting capabilities, which reflects the rising combat edge of a networked and future-ready force.

**FM Nirmala Sitharaman Launches 'PRARAMBH 2026' IT Awareness Campaign**

Union Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA), launched **PRARAMBH 2026** (Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat) in New Delhi (Delhi), a nationwide Income Tax Department awareness campaign for the implementation of the **Income Tax (IT) Act, 2025**, effective from **April 1, 2026**.

**Overview PRARAMBH 2026 Campaign:**

**Objective:** Aims to promote taxpayer awareness and ensure a citizen-centric tax administration under the IT Act, 2025 guided by "Nagrik Devo Bhava".

**Campaign:** PRARAMBH is a multi-channel initiative across print, television, radio, digital, social media, and outdoor platforms.

**Framework:** Aligned with M.A.N.A.V. –Moral and Ethical Systems, Accountable Governance, National Sovereignty, Accessible and Inclusive Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Valid and Legitimate Systems.

**Digital:** Launch of upgraded Income Tax Website 2.0 and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled chatbot Kar Saathi for improved taxpayer services.

**MoHFW Constitutes National Dental Commission, replaces Dental Council of India**

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) constituted the National Dental Commission (NDC), replacing the Dental Council of India (DCI).

- This newly constituted body aimed to transform Dental Education aimed at improving the quality of dental education and aligning it with global standards.

**About National Dental Commission:**

**Statutory Body:** NDC has been established as a statutory body under National Dental Commission (NDC Act, 2023) which came into force on March 19, 2026, repealing the Dentist Act, 1948.

**Structure:** Also, three autonomous bodies been constituted under NDC:

- **The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board** has been tasked to oversee dental education.

**Composition: Dr. Sanjay Tewari** has been appointed as the Chairperson of newly formed NDC, with Dr. Mousumi Goswami as its part-time member.

### **India and Indonesia Collaborate to Restore Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

India and Indonesia announced a collaborative initiative to restore the Prambanan Temple complex in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, strengthening cultural diplomacy and heritage conservation.

- This discussion took place on March 16, 2026, when Indonesia's Culture Minister Fadli Zon met the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) team in Jakarta, Indonesia.

#### **Prambanan Overview:**

**Location:** Prambanan is the largest Hindu temple complex located in Sleman near Yogyakarta, in Java, Indonesia, and is locally known as Roro Jonggrang.

**Origin:** The temple was built in the 9th century by the Sanjaya dynasty and is dedicated to the Hindu Trimurti—Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma.

**Recognition:** It was recognised as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site in 1991.

**Architecture:** The complex reflects a blend of indigenous Javanese styles and South Indian Pallava influences and comprises 240 temples with intricate carvings from the Ramayana and other Hindu epics

### **Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi's Book 'Karuna: The Power of Compassion' Released**

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi's latest book titled 'Karuna: The Power of Compassion' was formally launched by the Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion (SMGC), in association with Harper Collins India.

- The book was unveiled in the presence of Justice Surya Kant, Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Dr. Kiran Bedi, former Lieutenant (Lt.) Governor of Puducherry.
- Previously, the book was scheduled for release at the 19th Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) in January 2026 in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

#### **About The Book:**

**Key Focus:** The book emphasizes compassion which can be a transformative, active force to combat global crises such as inequality and conflict.

**CQ Concept:** The book introduces Compassion Quotient (CQ), a scientific approach to measure and increase compassion in individuals and organisations.

**The Nobel Peace Prize (2014):** Kailash Satyarthi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. He shared the prize with Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan.

- For their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education

## International

### India, European Union to grant each other Most Favoured Nation status for 5 years

The Government of India and the European Union (EU) agreed to grant each other **Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status** for a period of **five years**, starting from the date the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** enters into force.

#### About the India-EU MFN Provision:

**Duration:** MFN status is granted for five years from entry into force, subject to a fourth-year Joint Committee review and automatic termination unless mutually extended.

**Exceptions:** MFN excludes benefits arising from Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA), recognition and licensing measures under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), and sensitive agricultural products such as soya, beef, sugar, rice, and dairy.

#### About India- EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA):

**Finalisation:** The India–EU FTA, relaunched in 2022, was finalised in January 2026 and is expected to take effect after ratification by the European Parliament.

**Coverage:** The FTA eliminates or reduces tariffs on 96.6% of traded goods by value, saving 4 billion euros (USD 4.7 billion) for European companies and potentially doubling EU exports to India by 2032.

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Israel on February 26-27, 2026

Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi**, visited **Israel** at the invitation of **PM Benjamin Netanyahu, State of Israel**, accompanied by a high-level delegation of senior ministers and officials from 26th to 27th February 2026.

#### Highlights of the Visit:

**Memorial Visit:** He visited **Yad Vashem Memorial (YM)** in Jerusalem, paying tribute to Holocaust victims by laying a wreath and placing a commemorative stone.

**Knesset Address:** PM Narendra Modi became the **first Indian PM** to address the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) and signed the Knesset Guestbook, underscoring the deepening of India–Israel bilateral relations.

- After his address, PM Narendra Modi was conferred the '**Medal of the Knesset**' by Knesset Speaker **Amir Ohana**, which he dedicated to the enduring India–Israel friendship, becoming the first Indian PM to receive this honour.

**Outcome of the Visit:** During a joint press conference, PM Narendra Modi and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu announced the establishment of a Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation, and Prosperity, aimed at strengthening cooperation in defence, security, cybersecurity, trade, and technology.

- India and Israel signed **several agreements** following PM Narendra Modi's two-day State visit to Israel. The agreement cover cooperation in geophysical exploration, maritime heritage, culture, digital payments, agriculture, Artificial Intelligence (AI), fisheries, financial regulation, labour mobility, education, arbitration, academia, cybersecurity, along with several major strategic initiatives.
- **UN Report: Women Hold Only 64% of Legal Rights Globally**  
The United Nations (UN) **Secretary-General** released a report titled "**Ensuring and**

**Strengthening Access to Justice for All Women and Girls**", revealing that **women** worldwide hold only **64%** of the legal rights of men in nearly 70% of countries surveyed, resulting in pervasive discrimination and social exclusion.

**Key Findings of the Report:**

**Violence:** In 54% of countries, rape is not legally defined based on consent, while digital violence against women and girls is increasing with limited accountability for perpetrators.

**Marriage:** National laws in nearly three out of four countries still permit girls to be forced into marriage.

**Pay:** In 44% of countries, laws do not mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value, allowing legal gender pay disparities.

**Equality:** According to the report, no country in the world has yet achieved full legal equality between women and men.

### Overview of Mobile World Congress 2026 held in Barcelona, Spain

The Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2026, the world's largest event for the mobile and technology industry, was held from **March 2 to 5, 2026** at Fira Barcelona Gran Via, **Barcelona, Spain**, bringing together global telecom leaders, technology companies and policymakers.

#### About Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2026:

**Theme:** The theme of MWC 2026, "**The IQ Era**", emphasised the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with advanced connectivity to enable smarter networks, digital innovation and societal transformation.

**Organiser:** The event was organised by the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA).

**Indian Participation:** India's participation at MWC 2026 was led by **Union Minister Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia**, Ministry of Communications, who represented India at the GSMA Ministerial Programme and MWC Main Stage discussions.

- India's telecom innovators participated under the coordination of the Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) with support from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, Government of India (GoI). Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia launched the **TJ1600-D3 Hyper-scalable Data Center Interconnect (DCI) Platform** by Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Tejas Networks Limited at MWC 2026.

### Hurun Global Rich List 2026: India ranks third with 308 billionaires; Ambani remains richest Asian

The Hurun Research Institute released the 15th edition of the Hurun Global Rich List 2026, in which **Mukesh Ambani**, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), emerged as the richest person in India and Asia with a net worth of **Rs 9.8 lakh crore**.

- **Elon Musk** United States of America (USA), CEO of Tesla and founder of SpaceX, retained the world's richest person in the Hurun Global Rich List 2026 with a net worth

of USD 792 billion (up 89%), becoming the first person to surpass USD 700 billion, followed by **Jeff Bezos** (USA) (USD 300 billion) and **Larry Page** (USA) (USD 271 billion).

### Highlights of Hurun Global Rich List 2026:

**Ranking:** The Hurun Global Rich List 2026 ranked United States Dollar (USD) billionaires based on wealth calculated as of 15 January 2026, covering 4,020 billionaires from 2,914 companies across 73 countries, the first time the global count crossed 4,000.

**India:** India ranked third globally with 308 billionaires (57 new entrants) after China and the USA, with their combined wealth estimated at around Rs 112 lakh crore.

**Women:** China dominated self-made women billionaires with 75%, while **Diane Hendricks** (78) of ABC Supply (USA) remained the world's richest self-made woman for the fourth time with USD 24 billion, and **Alice Walton** (76) of Walmart was the richest woman globally with USD 119 billion.

**Richest women in India:** Roshni Nadar Malhotra is the **richest woman in India** and the first to enter the overall top three.

### Chile Becomes First Country in the Americas to Eliminate Leprosy: WHO

The World Health Organization (**WHO**), in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (**PAHO**), officially verified that **Chile** has **eliminated leprosy** as a public health problem.

#### About Elimination of Leprosy:

**Milestone:** With this milestone, Chile becomes the first country in the Americas and the second country globally after **Jordan** to achieve this recognition.

- Chile is now the 61st country globally and the 6th in the Americas to eliminate at least one Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD). This supports PAHO's Disease Elimination Initiative targeting over 30 communicable diseases by 2030.

**WHO Criteria:** The WHO defines leprosy elimination as a prevalence rate below 1 case per 10,000 population. Under the WHO Global Leprosy Strategy 2021–2030, transmission elimination is indicated by zero locally acquired cases for three consecutive years and no cases among children for five years.

### USA Announces First New Oil Refinery in 50 Years with Investment from Reliance Industries

Donald Trump, President of the United States of America (USA), announced that the USA would build its **first new oil refinery in nearly 50 years** with investment from Reliance Industries Limited (**RIL**), led by Indian industrialist **Mukesh Ambani**.

- The refinery will be developed at the **Port of Brownsville, Texas (USA)** and is expected to strengthen **energy security**, boost domestic oil production and create significant economic impact.

#### Overview of the Refinery Project

**Announcement:** USA announced the refinery project to expand domestic refining capacity and reduce dependence on imported refined petroleum products.

**Location:** The refinery will be developed at the Port of Brownsville (PoB) in Texas (TX), USA, marking the first major refinery built in the country since Marathon Petroleum Corporation (MPC) established its refinery at Garyville, Louisiana (LA) in 1977.

**Developer:** The project will be developed by **America First Refining (AFR)** with investment linked to RIL.

**Investment:** The refinery involves an estimated investment of about **USD 300 billion**, designed to process 1.2 billion barrels (BBL) of United States shale oil (USSO) valued at USD 125 billion and produce around 50 billion gallons (BG) of refined petroleum products worth about USD 175 billion.

### **IISc Professor Arpita Patra Summits World's Highest Volcano Nevado Ojos del Salado**

Arpita Patra, Professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru(Karnataka), successfully **summitted Nevado Ojos del Salado**, the world's highest volcanic peak and the highest mountain in Chile, located on the Chile–Argentina border in the Atacama Desert.

- With this achievement, she became the **second Indian woman** to scale the peak after Arunima Sinha, who completed the climb in 2019.

#### **Details of Summit:**

**Expedition:** Arpita Patra reached the summit of Nevado Ojos del Salado (6,893 metres) on 6 March 2026. The climb took her close to 7,000 metres(m) altitude, making it the highest elevation she has ever reached.

**Previous Mountaineering Achievements:** In May 2025, she became the first Indian woman to summit Mount Giluwe, and in October 2025, she became the second Indian woman to scale Pico de Orizaba.

- She has previously climbed Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 m) in Africa, Mount Elbrus (5,642 m) in Europe, Mount Giluwe (4,367 m) in Oceania, and Pico de Orizaba (5,636 m) in North America.

### **Indian Navy Participates in USA-Led Multinational Exercise 'Sea Dragon 2026' in Guam**

The Indian Navy(IN) participated in the two-week multinational **Exercise Sea Dragon 2026**, a United States of America(USA)-led multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise being held at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, the USA.

#### **About Sea Dragon 2026:**

**Overview:** Exercise Sea Dragon is an annual multinational maritime exercise hosted by the United States Navy's 7th Fleet, focusing on ASW training.

**Participation:** The 2026 edition includes forces from the IN, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF), and the United States Navy (USN), highlighting strong Indo-Pacific cooperation.

**Planning Phase:** The exercise begins with tabletop planning sessions, where participating forces align strategies, integrate technologies, and coordinate mission tactics.

### **Argentina Formally Withdraws from WHO Effective from March 2026**

Argentina formally withdrew from the World Health Organization (WHO), completing the process one year after notifying the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General AntónioGuterres, as confirmed by its Foreign Affairs Minister Pablo Quirno.

- The decision to withdraw was announced in February 2025 by Argentina President Javier Milei.

#### About Argentina's WHO Withdrawal:

**Legal Framework:** The withdrawal was carried out under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), which permits exit after a one-year notice period.

**Global Trend:** The move reflects a broader shift toward decentralised governance, following the United States of America (USA), which exited the WHO in January 2026.

#### Former Indian Ambassador Jawed Ashraf Conferred France's Legion d'honneur Rank of 'Commandeur'

Jawed Ashraf, former Ambassador of India to France, was conferred France's Legion of Honour (Commandeur rank) for his contribution to strengthening the India–France Strategic Partnership, becoming the **first** Indian Ambassador to receive this honour.

#### About Legion of Honour (Légion d'honneur):

**Award Presentation:** The award was presented in New Delhi, Delhi, by French Ambassador Thierry Mathou in the presence of National Security Advisor(NSA) AjitDoval.

**Indian Recipients Legion of Honour (Commandeur rank):** The Commander rank has been conferred on a limited number of Indians, including: JehangirRatanjiDadabhoy (JRD) Tata, Ratan Tata, Amartya Sen, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Satyajit Ray, Syed Haider (S.H.) Raza, Manna Dey.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the Grand Cross (highest level) in July 2023.

#### Forbes World's Billionaires List 2026: Elon Musk Tops Globally; Mukesh Ambani Leads in India

Forbes released its 40th annual World's Billionaires List 2026, the definitive ranking of the world's richest people featuring a record 3,428 billionaires, with **Elon Musk**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tesla and SpaceX, retaining the top spot for the second consecutive year with a net worth of about **USD 839 billion**, while **Mukesh Ambani**, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), ranked as India's richest with **USD 99.7 billion**.

- **Larry Page** of Alphabet (Google) ranked second with a net worth of USD 257 billion, followed by **Sergey Brin** of Alphabet Inc.(Google) in third place with USD 237 billion.

#### Highlights of Forbes Billionaires List 2026:

**Overview:** The list includes 3,428 billionaires with a combined net worth of **USD 20.1 trillion**, up from USD 16.1 trillion in 2025. The 2026 list includes 390 new entrants, reflecting a rise in younger billionaires.

**Countries:** The United States of America (USA) leads with 989 billionaires, followed by Mainland China with 539 billionaires and India ranking third with 229 billionaires.

**Women Representation:** In 2026, a total of 481 women featured on the list, accounting for 14% of all billionaires, up from 13.4% in 2025.

- Walmart heir **Alice Walton** remains the world's richest woman for the second consecutive year, with USD 134 billion.

#### WTO Global Trade Outlook 2026: Merchandise Trade Growth to Slow to 1.9%

The World Trade Organization (WTO) released its Global Trade Outlook and Statistics- March

2026 report, projecting global merchandise trade growth to slow sharply to **1.9% in 2026** from 4.6% in 2025, driven by geopolitical tensions in West Asia, normalization of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-related demand, and the effects of earlier tariff-driven front-loading of shipments.

#### **Key Findings:**

**2027:** Global merchandise trade growth is projected to recover to **2.6%** in 2027.

**Overall Trade Growth:** Combined goods and services trade is projected to grow by 2.7% in 2026, compared to 4.7% in 2025.

**Services Trade Growth:** Commercial services trade growth is expected to ease to 4.8% in 2026, down from 5.3% in 2025, before accelerating again to 5.1% in 2027.

**Global GDP:** The Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is forecast to moderate slightly from **2.9%** in 2025 to **2.8%** in both 2026 and 2027.

#### **Global Terrorism Index 2026: Pakistan Most Affected by Terrorism; India Ranked 13th**

Australian think tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) published the latest edition of **Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026**, which indicates a significant shift in the global security landscape. For the first time since the index's inception, **Pakistan** has been ranked as the **country most impacted by terrorism**, with an overall score of **8.574**, recording 1,139 deaths and 1,045 terrorist incidents in 2025, the highest fatality levels since 2013.

- **India** has been ranked at **13th spot** with an overall score of **6.428**.

#### **About GTI 2026:**

**Methodology:** The countries are ranked based on their respective composite scores which measures the impact of terrorism. For each country, GTI score ranges from **0 to 10**; where 0 represents no impact from terrorism and 10 represents the highest measurable impact of terrorism.

**Global Trends:** As per the index, terrorist incidents in 2025 were nearly six times higher than in 2020. However, terrorism-related incidents decreased by **22% to 2,944**, which marks the lowest figures since 2007.

- The index highlighted that global terrorism deaths declined by **28% to 5,582** in 2025.

**Most Impacted Countries:** Other top countries impacted by terrorism, this year, Burkina Faso slipped to 2nd rank in GTI with an overall score of 8.324; followed by Niger (3rd), Nigeria (4th) and Mali (5th).

#### **QS World University Rankings 2026: IIT (ISM) Dhanbad and IIM Ahmedabad Topped Among Indian Institutes**

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) released the 16th edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, in which Indian Institutes of Technology – Indian School of Mines (IIT-ISM) Dhanbad, Jharkhand ranked 21st globally in Engineering – Mineral and Mining and the Indian Institute Of Management(IIM) Ahmedabad, Gujarat ,secured 21st place in both Business and Management Studies and Marketing, marking India's debut in the Marketing subject ranking.

- The United States of America (USA) continues to lead globally with first place in 37 subjects, while the United Kingdom (UK) ranks second with the top position in 15 subjects.

**Highlights of QS Rankings 2026:**

**Institutional Presence:** The USA leads with 228 institutions, followed by China with 158 and the UK with 114, while India has 99 institutions, up from 79 in 2025.

**New Entries:** India becomes the **fourth**-largest higher education system by entries, with 120 new Indian entries, after the USA(287), China(181) and UK(159).

**India's Growing Global Presence:** India has doubled its top-50 subject presence since 2024, achieving 27 positions across 12 institutions, while expanding to **99 ranked institutions** with 599 subject entries, including 20 newly ranked universities.

**Top Indian Institutions in Global Subject Rankings:** IIT Delhi (36th globally in Engineering & Technology), IIT Bombay, Maharashtra (78th globally in Natural Sciences), and IIT Kharagpur (West Bengal), along with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi (26th globally in Development Studies), and Birla Institute of Technology (BITS), Pilani, Rajasthan (45th worldwide in Pharmacy & Pharmacology), feature among the world's top 50 institutions across various subjects.

## Defence

### Indian Navy Participates in 'Exercise KAKADU 2026' in Australia

The Indian Navy (IN) frigate Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Nilgiri** participated in the sea phase of 'Exercise Kakadu 2026' in Australia, as part of its deployment to the Western Pacific, aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### About Exercise Kakadu 2026:

**2026 Exercise:** The 17th edition of Exercise Kakadu 2026 witnessed participation from over 19 nations and 6,000 personnel, covering a vast area from Jervis Bay to Darwin, Australia.

**Fleet Review:** A Kakadu Fleet Review was held in Sydney Harbour, New South Wales on 21st March 2026, marking the largest gathering of foreign warships in over a decade and commemorating the 125th anniversary of the RAN.

**India's Participation:** INS Nilgiri took part in coordinated naval manoeuvres off northern Australia, alongside warships from Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand.

- The crew of INS Nilgiri won the **Kakadu Shield Trophy** during sporting events held in the harbour phase at Darwin, Australia.

### IAF Conducts 'Vayushakti-26' at Pokhran Range, Jaisalmer

The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted 'Exercise Vayushakti-26' at Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

- The exercise demonstrated IAF's combat readiness and capability to carry out integrated air operations across the full spectrum of warfare.
- President of India Droupadi Murmu attended the firepower demonstration as Chief Guest, and was accompanied by eminent dignitaries: Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde, Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Union Minister Kinjarapur Ram Mohan Naidu, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), among others.

#### Key Details of Ex-Vayushakti-26:

**Simulated Combat Theatre:** For the 1st time, the exercise was held along a defined operational storyline, turning into simulated live combat theatre. It seamlessly combined offensive air strikes, air defence operations, special forces missions and humanitarian assistance, which reflects IAF's role as a multi-domain, integrated force and country's first responder.

**Aircrafts Participated:** Over 130 aircrafts participated in the day-and-night exercise including Rafale, Su-30 MKI, Mirage-2000, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Mi-17, C-130J, C-295, C-17, the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand.

**Key Operations:** Air defence operations were held through coordinated engagements using airborne assets and ground-based systems such as Akash and Spyder missile systems, supported by air defence assets like L-70 and M-777.

### Indian Navy commissions 'Dolphin Hunter' INS Anjadip' at Chennai Port, TN

The Indian Navy (IN) commissioned Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Anjadip**, the **third** of eight indigenously built Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC), nicknamed the

‘**Dolphin Hunter**’, at **Chennai Port**, Tamil Nadu (TN), to enhance India’s Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and coastal surveillance capabilities.

- The commissioning ceremony was conducted by **Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi**, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), IN.

#### **About INS Anjadip:**

**Name:** The vessel is named after Anjadip Island off Karwar, Karnataka, in the Arabian Sea.

**Project:** It is the 3rd ASW SWC under the IN coastal defence enhancement programme, following INS Arnala and INS Androth.

**Developer:** Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, (West Bengal, WB), with over 80% indigenous content reflecting Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) in warship design and defence electronics.

**Specifications:** The vessel is **77 meters (m) long**, displaces **1,400 tonnes**, and is powered by a **high-speed water-jet propulsion system**, reaching speeds up to **25 knots** for rapid response in littoral and shallow-water operations.

#### **SIPRI Report 2025: India Remains World’s 2nd Biggest Arms Importer after Ukraine**

The Swedish think tank **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** released its latest report titled ‘Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2025’ which highlighted that **India** remained the world’s **second-largest arms importer** during 2021–2025, accounting for **8.2%** of global arms imports, after **Ukraine**.

- **Ukraine** emerged as the largest global arms importer, receiving 9.7% of total international arms transfers during the period while **Saudi Arabia** ranked 3rd with 6.8% of global arms importer.
- The United States of America (USA), **France**, and **Russia** were the top 3 global arms exporters during this period.

#### **Global Arms Trends:**

**Global Rise:** Global arms transfers increased by almost 10% during the same period due to heightened geopolitical tensions and expanded defence procurement.

**Regional Distribution:** **Europe** emerged as the largest arms-importing region, accounting for **33%** of global imports (up from 12%) over the last five years, as countries nearly tripled their purchases to support Russia–Ukraine War.

**India Links:** India remained the largest recipient of French arms (24% of France’s exports) and the largest destination for Russian arms exports (48%), highlighting India’s diversified defence partnerships.

#### **India and Seychelles Begin Joint Military ‘Exercise LAMITIYE 2026’ in Seychelles**

The Indian Armed Forces and the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF) commenced the 11th edition of the Joint Military Exercise ‘LAMITIYE-2026’ at the Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA), Victoria, Seychelles.

- The exercise is scheduled to be held for 12 days from 9 March to 20 March 2026.

#### **About Exercise LAMITIYE-2026:**

**Tri-Service:** LAMITIYE-2026 marks the first tri-service participation of the Indian Armed Forces

in the exercise.

**Participation:** The exercise involves the Indian Armed Forces including personnel from the Assam Regiment (AR) along with participation from the Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF).

- IN's Indian Navy Ships (INS) Trikanth warship (Talwar-class frigate) and IAF C-130 transport aircraft are deployed for the exercise.

**Operations:** The exercise focuses on Sub-Conventional Operations (SCO) in Semi-Urban Environments (SUE) and enhances interoperability in United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations.

### **NATO Commences Biennial Arctic Military Exercise 'Cold Response' Across Finland and Norway**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) commenced its biennial Arctic military exercise named 'Cold Response 2026' across Northern Norway and Finland.

- The military exercise will continue till March 19, 2026, focusing on the role of civilians in supporting military operations.

#### **Key Details of Cold Response:**

**Objective:** This military exercise has now officially become part of Arctic Sentry, The NATO aims to bolster its presence in the polar region.

**Key Participants:** The exercise is expected to witness the participation of nearly 25,000 troops from 14 NATO countries including 4,000 from the United States of America (USA) and Denmark.

**Focus Areas:** The Government of Norway has declared 2026 the year of 'total defence, which focuses on strengthening the readiness of civilians, businesses, and public institutions to face war and other crises.

### **IAF's SAC Conducts Joint Maritime Exercise 'Kalari Leap' in Arabian Sea**

The Southern Air Command (SAC) of the Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted 'Kalari Leap', a joint maritime exercise, across the Lakshadweep and Minicoy archipelago in the Arabian Sea.

#### **About Exercise Kalari Leap:**

**Objective:** The exercise focused on validating joint operational planning, rapid force projection, and precision execution in complex maritime environments.

**Coordinated Operations:** The exercise involved coordinated operations with the Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) alongside SAC units.

**Operations:** The IAF conducted airborne and air-landed insertions, heliborne and amphibious drills, anti-ship strikes, and search-and-rescue missions.

**Deployment:** The IAF deployed aircraft including AN-32 transport planes, Mi-17V5 helicopters, and Su-30MKI fighter jets. ICG contributed with its ships, Gemini boats, and Dornier 228 aircraft.

- AFSOD special forces participated in combat free-fall insertions and amphibious tasks.

## Appointments or Resign/Retired

### Ayatollah Alireza Arafī Named Iran's Interim Supreme Leader After Ayatollah Ali Khamene's Death

Senior Iranian cleric **Ayatollah Alireza Arafī** was appointed as **Iran's interim Supreme Leader** following the death of **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** in a joint United States of America(USA)-Israel airstrike.

- He serves as Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of Experts (AoE) and has been a member of the Guardian Council (GC) since 2019, overseeing leadership selection, candidate vetting, and legislative review.

#### About Iran Interim Leadership:

**Activation:** Article 111 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran mandated a three-member Interim Leadership Council to exercise his powers temporarily until the Assembly of Experts appoints a successor.

**Composition:** The council comprises President Masoud Pezeshkian, Chief Justice (CJ) Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei, and Ayatollah Alireza Arafī as the jurist member from the Guardian Council, selected by the Expediency Discernment Council (EDC).

### Jio Platforms Appoints Dan Bailey as President to Lead International Business

Jio Platforms Limited, the digital services arm of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), appointed **Dan Bailey** as **President** to lead its international business operations.

- In this role, he will be responsible for expanding Jio's global footprint, driving international partnerships, and scaling digital services across global markets.

#### About Dan Bailey:

**Experience:** He brings over 35 years of experience in consulting and investment banking.  
**Leadership Roles:** He has held senior leadership positions at Schrodgers/Citi, Morgan Stanley, and HSBC.

**Recent Role:** Most recently, he served as Chairman of Deutsche Bank's Technology, Media and Telecom (TMT) practice, where he advised on several major global telecom transactions.

**Reporting Structure:** He will report to Akash Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited, and will also join the Executive Committee of Jio Platforms Limited, contributing broadly to the company's strategic and business operations.

### ACC Re-appoints Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi as Drugs Controller General of India

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, approved the reappointment of **Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi** as **Drugs Controller General (India)** (DCGI) at the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

#### Key Details of Re-appointment:

**Extension Period:** The reappointment has been made on a contract basis for a further period of 1 year with effect from (w.e.f.) March 01, 2026, or till the appointment of a regular incumbent to the post, or until further orders, whichever is the earliest.

**Tenure Extension:** He was initially appointed as DCGI on 23 February 2023, and the current

reappointment marks his second tenure extension, after his term was earlier extended until February 2026.

### **President Murmu Appoints New Governors for 9 States and UTs**

**Droupadi Murmu**, the President of India, announced new appointments and transfers of **Governors and Lieutenant Governors** across 9 states and Union Territories (UTs).

#### **Key Highlights of the Reshuffle:**

**Appointments:** Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Syed Ata Hasnain was appointed as the Governor of Bihar, succeeding Arif Mohammed Khan.

- Jishnu Dev Varma, currently serving as the Governor of Telangana and former Deputy Chief Minister (DyCM) of Tripura, has been appointed as the Governor of Maharashtra.
- Shiv Pratap Shukla, currently serving as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh (HP), has been appointed as the Governor of Telangana.
- Nand Kishore Yadav, former Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, was appointed as the Governor of Nagaland.

**Transfers:** R.N. Ravi, Governor of TN, was appointed as the Governor of WB following the resignation of Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose.

- Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Governor of Kerala, will hold additional charge of TN temporarily.
- Kavinder Gupta, LG of Ladakh, was appointed as the Governor of HP.

**UT Changes:** Taranjit Singh Sandhu was appointed as the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of NCT of Delhi and Vinai Kumar Saxena was transferred from his post as LG of Delhi to serve as the LG of Ladakh.

### **President Appoints Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari as Chief Justice of Madras HC**

Droupadi Murmu, the President of India appointed Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari as the Chief Justice(CJ) of the Madras High Court (HC) under Article 217(1) of the Constitution of India.

- He succeeds Justice **Manindra Mohan Shrivastava**, who retired from office on 5 March 2026 upon attaining the age of superannuation.

#### **About Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari:**

**Legal Practice:** Enrolled as an advocate in 1992, he served as the Standing Counsel for the Union of India, the Income Tax Department, and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) between 2000 and 2015.

**Previous Roles:** Prior to this elevation, he served as a Judge of the Kerala HC and as a Permanent Judge of the Madhya Pradesh(MP) HC.

**Article 217(1):** It provides that HC judges are appointed by the President of India after consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Governor of the concerned State.

### **Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth to Assume Charge as Vice Chief of Army Staff on 1st April 2026**

The Indian Army (IA) announced the **appointment** of a major Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) **Dhiraj Seth**, the current General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of Southern

Army Commander, as the next Vice Chief of Army Staff (**VCOAS**). He will succeed **Lt Gen P. P. Singh** and assume office with effect from 1 April 2026.

- VCOAS is the second-highest position after the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and oversees operational readiness, modernization, strategic planning and coordination among Army commands.

#### About **Dhiraj** **Seth:**

**Commission:** Lt Gen Dheeraj Seth, an officer of the Armoured Corps (AC), was commissioned into the IA in December 1986.

**Command:** Before taking charge of Southern Command (SC) in July 2024, he commanded the XXI Strike Corps (21 Corps) based in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh (UP), one of the Army's key strike formations.

**Contribution:** During his tenure at Southern Command (SC) headquartered in Pune, Maharashtra, he enhanced training standards, operational readiness and strategic preparedness across peninsular India.

#### Iran Appoints Mojtaba Khamenei as New Supreme Leader

Mojtaba Khamenei was appointed as the Supreme Leader of Iran by the Assembly of Experts, following the death of his father **Ali Khamenei** in airstrikes. With this appointment, he became the third Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

##### Key Details:

**Background:** The decision was taken after a decisive vote by the members of the Assembly of Experts, the constitutional body responsible for appointing and supervising the Supreme Leader.

**Predecessor:** He succeeded Iranian cleric Alireza Arafai, who served as interim Supreme Leader of Iran.

#### Jose Antonio Kast Sworn in as President of Chile

Jose Antonio Kast Rist, founder and leader of the Republican Party of Chile, was sworn in as the 38th President of Chile for a four-year term following his victory in the 2025 Chilean presidential election, during a formal ceremony at the National Congress in Valparaíso, Chile.

##### Inauguration of New President:

**Symbolic Transfer:** Jose Antonio Kast Rist formally assumed office in the Hall of Honor, receiving the Piocha de O'Higgins, a traditional symbol of the Chilean presidency, from outgoing **President Gabriel Boric Font**.

**Indian Representation:** Union Minister of State (MoS) **Kirti Vardhan Singh**, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), represented the Government of India at the inauguration ceremony.

#### ACC Approves Appointment of KV Ramana Murty as Whole-Time Member of SEBI

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, approved the appointment of Kompella Venkata (**K.V.**) **Ramana Murty** as a Whole-Time Member (WTM) of Securities and Exchange Board of India (**SEBI**) for a period of three years from the date of assuming charge or until further orders.

- Following his appointment, the total number of WTMs on the SEBI board now **reaches 4**.

**About KV Ramana Murty:**

**Service:** He is a 1991-batch Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS) officer.  
**Previous Role:** Prior to his appointment to SEBI, he served as Additional Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) in the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

- He also served as a part-time member of SEBI board, as representative of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA).

**Composition of SEBI Board:**

**Total Members:** The SEBI board comprises a chairman, 4 whole-time members and 4 part-time members, including representatives from MoCA, Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

**Other WTM:** Apart from Murty, other 3 WTM include: Kamlesh Chandra Varshney, Sandip Pradhan and Amarjeet Singh.

**NBSL Appoints Mahendra Singh Dhoni as Brand Ambassador for BHIM Payments App**

NPCI BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) Services Limited (NBSL), a subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), appointed Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh (M.S.) Dhoni as the **brand ambassador** for the **BHIM Payments Application** (App).

**About Digital Payments Partnership:**

**Objective:** The partnership aims to enhance trust, inclusion, and scale in India's digital payments ecosystem, supporting BHIM app's next growth phase by building user preference and confidence.

**Key Role:** As the face of the campaign, MS Dhoni will feature in multi-channel promotional initiatives, highlighting BHIM's ease of use, security features, and accessibility.

**Platform:** Launched in 2016 on NPCI's UPI platform, the BHIM app is positioned as "Bharat Ka Apna Payments App," with wide reach across Tier 1–3 cities, support for 15+ regional languages, optimisation for low-connectivity areas, and engagement driven through rewards and merchant partnerships.

**City Union Bank Appoints Ravindra Jadeja as Brand Ambassador**

City Union Bank Limited (CUB) appointed Indian cricketer **Ravindra sinh Anirudh sinh Jadeja** as its **brand ambassador**, valid for a period of two years, as per a regulatory filing made in compliance with disclosure norms.

**Key Highlights:**

**Objective:** The initiative aims to strengthen the bank's visibility and connect with a broader customer base across India.

**Partner:** The agreement was executed in association with **Baseline Ventures India Private Limited**, which manages sports personalities and brand partnerships.

**Disclosure:** The announcement was made under Regulation 30 read with Schedule III of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

## Honours/ Awards

### TIME Women of the Year 2026: Safeena Husain founder of Educate Girls Features Among 16 Global Leaders

In March 2026, **Safeena Husain**, the founder of the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) **Educate Girls**, was featured on the TIME Women of the Year 2026 list, alongside fellow Indian-origin leaders **Reshma Kewalramani** and **Reshma Saujani**, recognizing their impactful contributions to education, biotechnology, and social advocacy toward a more equitable world.

- The distinguished list includes actor and singer-songwriter Teyana Taylor; actor Lucy Liu; singer-songwriter Brandi Carlile; actor Sheryl Lee Ralph; filmmaker Chloé Zhao; and Olympic gold medallist Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone.
- TIME will honor the 2026 TIME Women of the Year honorees at the Women of the Year Leadership Forum and the Women of the Year Gala on 10 March 2026 in Los Angeles, the United States of America (USA).

### About Safeena Husain & Educate Girls:

**Founder:** Safeena Husain founded Educate Girls in 2007 to address the issue of out-of-school girls in rural, remote, and tribal communities of India affected by poverty and gender bias.

**Expansion:** The initiative expanded from a few villages in Rajasthan to over 30,000 villages across 12 states, becoming one of India's largest community-driven programmes for girls' education.

**Recognition:** In 2025, Educate Girls became the **first Indian organisation** to receive the **Ramon Magsaysay Award**, regarded as Asia's highest honour for community leadership.

### KV Subramanian becomes 1st Indian Economist to Win Chicago Alumni Award

The University of Chicago honoured eminent Indian economist Dr. Krishnamurthy Venkata (**K.V.**) **Subramanian** with the **Alumni Award for Professional Achievement**, becoming the 1st Indian economist to receive this honor since it was established in 1941

- Following this recognition, Subramanian is now among a distinguished group of recipients that includes **at least 14** and global leaders such as: Paul Samuelson, Gary Becker, Claudia Goldin, Carl Sagan, among others.

### About K.V. Surbramanian:

**Previous Role:** Subramanian served as Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) to the Government of India (GoI) from 2018 to 2021. Later, he represented India as its Executive Director (ED) at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

**Current Role:** Currently, he is serving as a Professor of Finance at the Indian School of Business (ISB).

**Author:** Apart from a career as distinguished economist, he also authored a book titled '**India@100**'.

### Bokaro Steel Plant Receives BIS Certification for Four New Steel Grades

The Bokaro Steel Plant (**BSL**), a unit of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), received certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (**BIS**) for four new steel grades – **ISC 440 LA**,

ISC 470 LA, ISC 510 LA, and ISC 550 LA, enabling the plant to expand its range of high-quality steel products.

- The approval allows the plant to expand its production of High Strength Low Alloy (HSLA) cold-rolled steel, enhancing its portfolio of high-value products.

#### About Inclusion of New Steel Grades:

**Certification Expansion:** Earlier, the BIS certification covered steel grades only up to ISC 410. With the latest approval, the new grades are included under **IS 513 (Part 2)**, ensuring compliance with nationally recognised quality standards.

**Significance:** It will improve product credibility and expand applications across sectors such as infrastructure, engineering, and manufacturing.

**Special Electrical Steel:** The plant also produced about 1,100 tonnes of 0.5 millimeter (mm) thick IS 18316 LS Grade Non-Grain Oriented (NGO) Electrical Steel for the first time, which is used in electric motors, generators, transformers, and hybrid or electric vehicle rotors to support energy-efficient technologies.

#### 98th Academy Awards- Oscars 2026: 'One Battle After Another' wins six Oscars for Best Picture

The 98th Edition of the Academy Awards (Oscars 2026), organized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), was held on 15 March 2026 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, the United States of America (USA), honoring the best films released in 2025 across 24 categories.

#### Highlights of Oscar 2026:

**Most Awards:** The film “**One Battle After Another**,” directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, emerged as the biggest winner at the 98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026), winning six Oscars— Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actor (Sean Penn), Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Film Editing, and Best Casting.

**Maximum Nominations:** The film “Sinners” received 16 nominations, the highest among all films at the 98th Academy Awards.

**New Category:** The Academy introduced a new category – **Achievement in Casting**, with ‘Cassandra Kulukundis’ winning the inaugural award for the film “One Battle After Another.”

**Best Actor:** Michael B. Jordan won Best Actor in a Leading Role for the film “Sinners.”

**Best Actress:** Jessie Buckley became the first Irish actress to win Best Actress for the film “Hamnet.”

**Indian Representation:** **Priyanka Chopra** presented the Best International Feature Film award along with Spanish actor Javier Bardem.

#### R. Vairamuthu Honoured with 2025 Jnanpith Award; Third Tamil Writer to Receive Honour

Renowned Tamil poet and lyricist **R. Vairamuthu** (Vairamuthu Ramasamy) was selected for the **60th Jnanpith Award** for the year 2025, India’s highest literary honour.

- With this recognition, he became the **third Tamil writer** to receive the prestigious award after P. V. Akilandam (Akilan) in 1975 and Jayakanthan in 2002.

#### About Jnanpith Award 2026:

**Institution:** The Jnanpith Award is presented annually by **Bharatiya Jnanpith**, instituted

in 1961 and first awarded in 1965, for outstanding contribution to Indian literature.

**Eligibility:** The Jnanpith Award is conferred for outstanding literary works written in any of the languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

**Prize Components:** The award carries a cash prize of **Rs 11 lakh**, a bronze statue of Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), and a citation.

### **BCCI Naman Awards 2026: Roger Binny, Rahul Dravid, Mithali Raj Win Lifetime Achievement Awards**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) presented its annual Naman Awards 2026 in New Delhi, Delhi, honouring outstanding performances and contributions in Indian cricket for the 2024–25 season.

- **Roger Binny** and **Rahul Dravid** were conferred with the highest honour of BCCI, Colonel (Col.) **C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award**, while **Mithali Raj** received the **Lifetime Achievement Award (Women)** for her contribution to women's cricket.

### **Highlights of BCCI Awards and Honours 2026:**

**Polly Umrigar:** Shubman Gill won the Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men) after scoring 983 runs in Tests and 490 runs in One Day Internationals (ODIs).

**Women Award:** Smriti Mandhana was named Best International Cricketer (IC) (Women) for the fifth time, scoring 434 runs in the Women's ODI World Cup (WWC) and setting a record with five ODI centuries in 2025.

**Domestic:** Shafali Verma won the Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy (JDT) for Best Woman Cricketer in Senior Domestic One Day (SDOD) cricket for 2024–25.

**Debut:** Harshit Rana (Men) and N Sree Charani (Women) received awards for Best International Debut.

### **RBI Wins 'Initiative of the Year' Award for '.bank.in' Domain Rollout**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) won the 'Initiative of the Year' award by the London (the United Kingdom, UK)-based Central Banking at the 13th annual Central Banking Awards for its innovative '.bank.in' domain rollout initiative designed to combat rising cyber frauds in the digital financial ecosystem.

- The Central Bank of Colombia was recognised for Bre-B, its federated retail payments system, while the National Bank of Ethiopia won for wholesale payment services development and the Bank of Namibia for its artificial intelligence initiative.

### **About '.bank.in' Domain:**

**Domain Framework:** The domain, launched in February 2025, is designed around exclusivity and stringent control, with only RBI-licensed banks allowed to use it.

**Significance:** With the launch of this domain, India becomes the world's 1st country to mandate a secure and exclusive internet domain for the banking system.

**Sole Registrar:** RBI had appointed the Institute for Development and Research on Banking Technology (IDRBT) as the sole registrar for the rollout of the domain.

**Phase-wise Rollout:** Banks were mandated to transition their net banking websites to the domain by October 31, 2025.

### Professor Kaveh Madani Named 2026 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate

Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), was named the **2026 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate** at a ceremony held at UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Headquarters in Paris, France during the 2026 World Water Day (March 22) event.

- At 44, Kaveh Madani became the youngest recipient in the prize's 35-year history, and the first UN official as well as the first former politician to receive the award.

#### About Kaveh Madani:

**Profile:** An Iranian scientist, Kaveh Madani currently serves as Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

**Recognition:** He was honoured for his contributions to **water governance and crisis management**, which shifted the global focus from infrastructure-based solutions to governance-driven approaches and highlighted that weak governance is a key cause of water crises.

### Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran Conferred Honorary Knighthood by UK

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, was conferred the **Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE)** by the United Kingdom (UK) government for his contribution to strengthening India–UK business relations.

- The honour was presented by Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India, at the British High Commissioner's residence in New Delhi (Delhi), on behalf of King Charles III.

#### About the KBE (Civil Division) Honour:

**Overview:** The KBE (Civil Division) is an honorary knighthood awarded to foreign nationals for pre-eminent service in business, public life, culture, and international relations.

**Title Rule:** UK nationals awarded knighthood use the title 'Sir' or 'Dame', while non-UK recipients add 'KBE' as a suffix to their name.

**Previous Indian Recipients of KBE:** Jamshed Irani (1997), Ravi Shankar (2001), Ratan Tata (2009, later elevated to GBE in 2014), Lakshmi Niwas Mittal (2015), and Sunil Bharti Mittal (2025).

### Indian Mountaineer Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma Sets Guinness World Record for Seven Volcanic Summits

Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma, a native of Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh, AP), scripted history by setting a new Guinness World Record (GWR) for the fastest time to climb the **Seven Volcanic Summits** (in male category), completing the challenge in **92 days, 4 hours, and 45 minutes**, breaking previous global benchmarks.

#### Key Details:

**Expedition Journey:** Varma officially started his expedition from Mount Elbrus (Europe) in Southwest Russia on 23 October 2024 concluded his journey in Sidley, remote terrain of Antarctica on 23 January 2025.

**Official Recognition:** The record was officially recognized on 6 February 2026, and Varma received his certificate in Delhi on 17 March 2026.

**Seven Volcanic Summits:** Mount Elbrus (Europe); Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa); Mount Damavand (Asia); Pico de Orizaba (North America); Ojos del Salado (South America); Mount Giluwe (Oceania) and Mount Sidley (Antarctica)

### William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 for 'The Golden Road'

Historian **William Dalrymple** was awarded the **Mark Lynton History Prize 2026** for his book "The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World."

#### Key Highlights:

**Administration:** The prize is part of the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize Project and is administered by the **Nieman Foundation for Journalism** and the **Columbia University School of Journalism**.

**Cash Prize:** The Mark Lynton History Prize is an annual award carrying a cash prize of **USD10,000**.

**Published:** Published by **Bloomsbury India**, the book draws from Dalrymple's decades of research on Indian history.

**Award Nature:** The Mark Lynton History Prize is an annual international award recognising outstanding historical writing with emphasis on intellectual depth, literary excellence and clarity of expression. The award is named after **Mark Lynton**, an author and advocate of historical writing.

**About William Dalrymple:** William Dalrymple is a renowned historian and author known for his contributions to historical writing. His notable works include **White Mughals**, **The Last Mughal**, **Return of a King** and **The Anarchy**.

### Indian Actress Rituparna Sengupta Receives Women Empowerment Award at UK's House of Commons

Renowned Indian actress and National Film Awardee **Rituparna Sengupta** was honored with the **Women Empowerment Award** for Arts and Culture at the House of Commons (British Parliament) in London, the United Kingdom (UK).

- She received the award in recognition of her work in art and culture during an event organised by London(the UK)-based registered Community Interest Company (CIC), **GloWomen CiC** to mark **International Women's Day** (observed annually on March 08).

#### About

#### Rituparna

#### Sengupta:

**Notable Work:** She is best known for her films like: **Rajkahini** (2015), **Ahaa Re** (2019), and **Parcel** (2020).

**National Film Award:** She was honoured with the **National Film Award** in 'Best Actress' category for her role in Rituparno Ghosh's film **Dahan** (1998).

**Other Awards/honors:** She won **Filmfare Critics Award** for Best Actress for her outstanding performance in 'Alik Sukh' in 2014.

**Bengali Writer RamkumarMukhopadhyay Selected for SaraswatiSamman 2025**

Eminent Bengali writer **RamkumarMukhopadhyay** was selected for the **35th Saraswati Samman** (2025) for his novel '*Hara Parbati Katha*(2020)', marking a significant recognition for Bengali literature.

**About SaraswatiSamman:**

**Establishment:** The SaraswatiSamman was instituted in **1991** by the K. K. **Birla**

**Foundation.** The award is named after Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and learning.

**Nature of Award:** It is one of India's highest literary honours, awarded for an outstanding work published in the last **10 years** in any of the **22 languages** listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution.

**Award Components:** The award carries a cash prize of **Rs 15 lakh**, along with a citation and a plaque.

## Sports

### Jammu & Kashmir Clinches First Ranji Trophy Title 2025-26

The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cricket team won its first-ever **Ranji Trophy title 2025-26** by defeating eight-time champions **Karnataka** in the final held at Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) Rajnagar Stadium, Hubballi, Karnataka on 28th February 2026.

- J&K clinched the championship with a commanding 291-run first-innings lead in a drawn five-day final, becoming the 19th team to win the trophy since their 1959–60 debut.

### About Ranji Trophy 2025-26:

**Match Summary:** J&K posted 584 runs in the first innings (Shubham Pundir 121) and bowled out Karnataka for 293 (Auqib Nabi 5/54), while second-innings centuries from Qamran Iqbal (160\*) and Sahil Lotra (101) extended the lead to 633 runs, securing the title on first-innings advantage after a draw.

**Tournament Star:** Auqib Nabi was named Player of the Tournament with 62 wickets, emerging as the season's leading wicket-taker.

**Top Scorer:** Abdul Samad was J&K's highest run-scorer with 748 runs at an average of 57.

### George Russell Won Australian Grand Prix 2026 for Mercedes in F1 2026 Season Opener

George Russell of Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One (F1) Team won the 2026 Australian Grand Prix (GP), also known as F1 Qatar Airways Australian Grand Prix 2026) at the Albert Park Circuit in Melbourne, Australia, marking the opening race of the **F1 World Championship 2026 season** and the beginning of F1's new technical regulation era.

- George Russell secured victory from pole position to lead a **1–2 finish** ahead of teammate (Mercedes) **Kimi Antonelli** on his full-season debut, while **Charles Leclerc** of Scuderia Ferrari finished third to complete the podium.
- The victory marked George Russell's sixth F1 Grand Prix win and Mercedes' 132nd Grand Prix victory with its 61st one-two finish.

### 2026 Formula One (F1) Regulation Changes:

**Hybrid Power:** The 2026 F1 regulations introduced major changes to the chassis and power unit, featuring a 50:50 power split between the Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) and Electric Power Unit (EPU).

### India Won ICC Men's T20 World Cup Title 2026 by Defeating New Zealand by 96 Runs in Gujarat

The India men's national cricket team won the 10th edition of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Twenty20 (T20) World Cup 2026 by defeating New Zealand by 96 runs in the final held at the world's largest cricket stadium 'Narendra Modi Stadium', Ahmedabad (Gujarat).

- India won its **third ICC T20 World Cup title**, having previously won the **second title in 2024** and the **first in the inaugural 2007 edition**, becoming the first team to successfully defend the championship.

**About ICC T20 World Cup 2026:**

**Host:** The 10th ICC Men's T20I World Cup was co-hosted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) from **7 February to 8 March 2026**.

**Organisation:** The tournament was organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC) as the global championship of Twenty20 International (T20I) cricket.

**Format:** The event followed the T20I format and featured an expanded 20-team global competition.

**Prize Pool:** The ICC allocated a USD 13.5 million prize pool, with India winning USD 3 million (about Rs.27.48 crore) after defeating New Zealand (USD 1.6 million) in the final.

**India to Host Asia Cup Archery 2027 Second Leg in Delhi After 22 Years**

New Delhi, the national capital of India, is set to host the second leg of the Asia Cup Archery in 2027, marking India's first international archery event in 22 years since the Asian Archery Championships held in Delhi in 2005.

- The decision was finalised after **Kazi Rajib Uddin Ahmed Chapol**, President of World Archery Asia, met Virendra Sachdeva, Secretary General of the Archery Association of India, during his three-day visit to Kolkata, West Bengal(WB).

**Key Archery Tournaments:**

**Key Tournaments:** **Ahmedabad** (Gujarat) is set to host the Asian Para Archery Championships 2026 in September 2026 and **Kolkata** (WB) will host the South Asian Archery Championships 2026.

**Asia Cup Archery 2026:** The opening leg of the Asia Cup Archery is scheduled in Bangkok, Thailand from March 21 to 26, 2026.

- The second leg of the tournament will be held in Iraq, while the third and final leg is scheduled in China

**Archery World Cup 2026:** This year's Archery World Cup is scheduled in Puebla, Mexico, from April 07 to 12, 2026.

- Meanwhile, the 2nd and 3rd leg of the tournament will be hosted by China and Turkey in Shanghai (May 05 to May 10, 2026) and Antalya (June 09 to June 14, 2026), respectively.

**India Tops Medal Table at World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 with 208 Medals in New Delhi**

India topped the medal standings at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix (WPAGP) 2026 – New Delhi leg, the second stop of the 13th Grand Prix season, winning 208 medals (75 gold, 69 silver, and 64 bronze) at the three-day event held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi(Delhi), from 11–13 March 2026.

- Russia** finished second with 35 medals (15 gold, 14 silver, and 6 bronze), while **Bosnia & Herzegovina** secured third place with 3 medals (1 gold, 2 silver, and 0 bronze).

**About World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026:**

**Organizer:** It is organised by World Para Athletics (WPA), a division of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) with support from the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI).

**Events:** The competition featured more than 90 track and field events across various classification categories for para-athletes.

- The competition featured track events (100 meters (m), 200 m, 400 m, and 800 m races), field events (long jump, high jump, javelin throw, shot put, and discus throw), as well as wheelchair racing and other adapted athletics events.

**Qualification Pathway:** The World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026, served as a key qualifying event, offering classification and performance opportunities for the 2026 World Para Athletics Championships and the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.

### Former Pakistan Captain Sarfaraz Ahmed Announces Retirement from International Cricket

Former Pakistan cricket captain **Sarfaraz Ahmed** announced his **retirement from international cricket**, concluding a career that spanned nearly two decades (2007–2023)

#### About Sarfaraz Ahmed:

**Career Span:** Sarfaraz Ahmed made his international debut for Pakistan in 2007, while his final appearance came in a Test match against Australia at Perth, Australia in 2023.

**Matches Played:** During his international career, Sarfaraz Ahmed played 54 Test matches, 117 One Day Internationals (ODIs), and 61 Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is), totaling 232 matches, and scored 6,164 runs, including 6 centuries and 35 half-centuries across formats.

**Wicketkeeper:** He recorded 315 catches and 56 stumpings across international formats.

**Achievements:** He captained Pakistan in 100 international matches, leading the team to the No.1 T20I ranking, a record 11 consecutive T20I series wins, and the International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy 2017 title, after earlier winning the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup 2006 as captain.

### Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli Wins First F1 Chinese Grand Prix 2026

Italy's Andrea Kimi Antonelli, driving for Mercedes-AMG Petronas, won his first-ever 2026 Chinese Grand Prix (GP) (also known as Formula 1 (F1) Heineken Chinese Grand Prix 2026) held at the Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai (China)

- George Russell** (United Kingdom, UK) of Mercedes finished second, while **Lewis Hamilton** (UK) of Ferrari secured third place.

#### Overview Chinese GP 2026:

**Edition:** The 2026 race marked the 19th running of the Chinese GP and the 19th time it was hosted at the Shanghai International Circuit (SIC).

**Round:** This was the second round of the 2026 Formula One World Championship (F1WC)

**Ferrari:** Charles Leclerc of Ferrari finished fourth contributing to the Constructors' Championship.

**Haas:** Oliver Bearman of Haas secured fifth place, recording his best result of the 2026 season.

## Obituary

### Veteran Congress Leader and Former Union Minister KP Unnikrishnan Passed Away

Veteran politician and former Union Minister **KP Unnikrishnan** passed away at the age of 90 in **Kozhikode, Kerala**. Born on September 20, 1936, in Koyilandy, Kozhikode, he was a prominent figure in Indian parliamentary history for over three decades.

#### Early Life and Background:

**Journalism:** Before his entry into active politics, KP Unnikrishnan began his professional journey in journalism. He was significantly associated with the Mathrubhumi daily, a leading Malayalam newspaper.

**Politics:** He joined the Indian National Congress (INC) in the 1960s. By 1962, he had secured a position as a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), marking the start of his long-standing political career.

**Committees:** Beyond his legislative duties, he contributed to fiscal oversight as a member of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) between 1980 and 1982. The PAC is a parliamentary committee that examines the appropriation accounts of the Government of India and the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

### Veteran Journalist & Former Diplomat H.K. Dua Passes Away

Renowned journalist, former diplomat and parliamentarian, **Hari Krishan (HK) Dua** passed away at the age of **88** in New Delhi, Delhi. He was born on July 01, 1937.

- He was honored by the Government of India (GoI) in 1998 with **Padma Bhushan**, India's 3rd highest civilian honor in the 'Literature and Education' (**Journalism**) category.

#### About HK Dua:

**Journalism Career:** During his illustrious journalistic career which spans more than 40 years, he has held senior editorial positions at some of the famous print media houses in India like: served as the Editor of **The Hindustan Times (HTI)** (1987-94); Editor-in-Chief of **The Indian Express** (1994-96); and **The Tribune** (2003-09); and Editorial Advisor, **The Times of India (TOI)** (1997-98).

**Diplomat Career:** He had also worked as the Media Advisor to two Prime Ministers (PMs): Atal Bihari Vajpayee and H.D. Deve Gowda.

- In addition, he also served as **Ambassador of the GoI to Denmark** (2001-2003).

**Nominated to Rajya Sabha:** He was also nominated member of the **Rajya Sabha**, the Upper House of the Parliament (**from 2009 to 2015**). During his term, he actively participated in debates on issues like foreign affairs and national security.

### 1965 India-Pakistan War Hero and Vir Chakra Awardee K.G. George Passed Away

Lance Havildar (ret'd) **K.G. George**, Vir Chakra (VC) awardee from the 1965 India-Pakistan War, passed away in Kottayam, Kerala at the age of 95. He was born in February 1931.

#### About K.G. George:

**Profile:** He was a veteran of the Indian Army who served in the Corps of Signals, the army's communication arm established on 15 February 1911.

**Bravery:** During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, he risked his life to establish a vital

communication link between the Brigade Headquarters and forward battalions during an enemy attack.

**Award:** For displaying exceptional courage and devotion to duty, he was awarded the **Vir Chakra**, India's third-highest wartime gallantry award.

**Retirement:** He retired from the Indian Army(IA) as a Lance Havildar and remained recognised for his significant contribution to India's military history.

### **Veteran Congress Leader and Former Union Minister Biren Singh Engti Passed Away**

Veteran leader of Indian National Congress (INC) party and former Union Minister of State (MoS) **Biren Singh Engti** passed away at the age of **81** in Guwahati, Assam. He was born on March 02, 1945 in Karbi Anglong, Assam.

**About Biren Singh Engti:**

**Parliamentary Career:** He started his parliamentary career in the 1970s and was elected to the Lok Sabha (The Lower House of the Parliament) **5-times** from **Diphu** constituency (Assam) ie. in 1977, 1984, 2009, and twice in 2014.

**Union MoS:** During **Rajiv Gandhi**(former Prime Minister(PM) of India)-led central government , he served as MoS for various ministries such as: the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPG&P); and the Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation between 1986 and 1989.

**Role in Autonomous Council:** Other than his parliamentary role and MoS at the central government, he had also served as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC).

### **Veteran BJP Leader and former MP 'DattaMeghe' Passed Away**

In March 2026, veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Member of Parliament (MP) '**DattaMeghe**' passed away at the age of 89 in Maharashtra. He was born on November 11, 1936, in Pawnsar village of Wardha district, Maharashtra.

**About DattaMeghe:**

**Political Tenure:** His political career spanned over **five decades** across multiple legislative bodies.

**MLC Role:** He was first elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) in 1978 and served three consecutive terms until 1991.

**Parliamentary Role:** He was a four-time LS MP from Nagpur, Ramtek, and Wardha, and also served as an RS member from 2002 to 2008.

## Important Days with theme

### National Science Day 2026 – February 28

National Science Day (NSD) is observed annually on **28th February** across India to commemorate the discovery of the **Raman Effect (1928)** by Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (C. V. Raman).

- 28th February 2026 marks the observance of the 40th NSD.
- **2026 Theme:** “Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat”

#### Background:

**Recommendation:** In 1986, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) recommended that 28 February be designated as NSD in India.

**First Observance:** The first NSD was officially celebrated on 28 February 1987 to honor the Raman Effect and promote scientific awareness.

**National Event:** The Department of Science and Technology (DST), under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T) hosted the national celebration at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, Delhi, featuring lectures by eminent scientists and a science-policy dialogue chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA).

### World Wildlife Day 2026 – March 3

The United Nations (UN’s) **World Wildlife Day (WWD)** is observed annually on **3rd March** to honor and raise awareness about the world’s wild fauna (animals) and flora (plants). It highlights the importance of wildlife conservation and its vital role in sustaining ecosystems.

- **2026 Theme:** “Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods”.

#### Background:

**Declaration:** On 20th December 2013, during its 68th session, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3rd March as WWD through Resolution 68/205.

**First Observance:** The first-ever WWD was celebrated globally on **March 3, 2014**.

**Significance:** March 3rd was selected to mark the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.

**Implementation:** The **CITES Secretariat**, in collaboration with relevant UN organizations, coordinates and supports the implementation of WWD worldwide.

### World Hearing Day 2026 – March 3

World Hearing Day (**WHD**), observed annually across the globe on **March 3**, raises awareness about **hearing loss** and promotes ear and hearing care, serving as a call to action to tackle related challenges.

- March 3, 2026 marks the observance of the **20th WHD**.
- **2026 Theme:** The World Health Organization (**WHO**) sets the official theme for WHD, which this year is “From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children”.

**Background:**

**Beijing Declaration :** The First International Conference on Prevention and Rehabilitation of Hearing Loss in Beijing (China) adopted the **Beijing Declaration**, leading to the creation of **International Ear Care Day** to promote global hearing care.

**First Observation:** The inaugural International Ear Care Day was held on **3rd March 2007**, with the date chosen because the numbers 3 and 3 resemble the shape of ears.

**Renaming :** In 2016, the day was renamed **World Hearing Day** to reflect its broader mission of raising awareness about hearing loss.

**National Security Day 2026 – March 4**

National Security Day (NSD), also known as **Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas**, is observed across India every year on **4 March** to honor and express gratitude to the Indian security forces including the Police, Military, Paramilitary forces, Guards, Commandos, and all personnel dedicated to safeguarding the nation and ensuring the safety of its citizens.

- The first NSD in India was observed on March 4, 1972.

**About National Security Council (NSC) of India:**

**Establishment:** The National Security Council (NSC) was established on 19 November 1998 by former Prime Minister (PM) Atal Bihari Vajpayee as a federal institutional and consultative body for national security decision-making.

**Structure:** The NSC is chaired by the PM with the National Security Advisor (NSA) serving as Secretary and operates as a three-tier system within the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

**National Safety Day 2026 – March 4**

National Safety Day (NSD) is observed annually on **4 March** across India to highlight the importance of safety measures in preventing workplace accidents and to promote a strong safety culture through adherence to safety guidelines.

- The day also marks the beginning of the **National Safety Week Campaign**, which is observed nationwide from **4 to 10 March** every year.
- **Theme:** “Engage, Educate & Empower People to Enhance Safety”

**Background:**

**Declaration:** In 1972, the NSC designated 4 March as NSD, launching a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about safety standards and practices.

**First Observance:** The first NSD was also observed on **March 4, 1972**.

**International Women's Day 2026 – March 8**

**International Women's Day (IWD)** of the United Nations (UN) is annually observed worldwide on **8 March** to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and to recognise their contributions across all divisions, including national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic, and political.

- 8 March 2026 marks the **51st** year of the United Nations' (UN) official observance of IWD.
- **2026 Theme:** “Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls”

**Background:**

**Recognition:** The UN began observing IWD in **1975**, which was designated as **International Women's Year**.

**Resolution:** In December **1977**, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 8 March as the UN Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

**2026 Events:**

**Global Event:** UN is hosting the global commemoration at its Headquarters in New York, United States of America (USA), alongside the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), the world's largest annual forum on gender equality and women's rights held from **9–19 March 2026**.

**Event in India:** Nationwide celebrations were organised in New Delhi (Delhi) in the presence of Droupadi Murmu, President of India.

**International Day of Women Judges 2026 – March 10**

The United Nations (UN's) **International Day of Women Judges (IDWJ)** is observed annually across the globe on **10th March** to promote the full and equal participation of women in judicial systems and recognise the contributions of women judges in strengthening justice, rule of law and gender equality.

- 10 March 2026 marks the **5th** observance of IDWJ.
- **2026 Theme:** "Women Judges on the Bench and Beyond: Protecting Access to Justice."

**Background:**

**Resolution:** The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/75/274 on 28 April **2021**, introduced by Qatar, designating 10 March as the IDWJ.

- The resolution acknowledged the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and its Global Judicial Integrity Network (GJIN) in promoting greater women's representation in judicial systems.

**Observance:** The first IDWJ was observed on **10 March 2022**.

**CISF Raising Day 2026 – March 10**

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) **Raising Day** is observed annually across India on **10 March** to commemorate the establishment of the CISF in **1969** and to honour the service, dedication, and sacrifices of its personnel in safeguarding the nation's critical infrastructure and industrial assets.

- 10 March 2026 marks the **57th CISF Raising Day**.

**CISF Background:**

**Establishment:** In 1969, CISF was established under the Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968 (Act No. 50 of 1968). It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

**Legislative Process:** The CISF Bill was passed by the Parliament of India on 13 August 1968 and received Presidential assent on 2 December 1968.

- The Act came into force on 10 March 1969, marking the formation of CISF.

**2026 Celebrations:** In 2019, the GoI decided to celebrate CISF Raising Day across different parts of India, instead of only in New Delhi, Delhi.

**World Kidney Day 2026 – March 12**

World Kidney Day (WKD) is a global campaign observed on the **second Thursday of March** each year to raise awareness about kidney disease, highlight the importance of kidney health, and promote equal access to healthcare and treatment worldwide.

- WKD 2026 is observed on **12 March 2026** and marks the 20th anniversary of WKD.
- **2026 Theme:** “Kidney Health for All – Caring for People, Protecting the Planet.”

**Background:**

**Origin:** The concept of WKD was introduced by the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF).

**Launch:** The inaugural WKD was launched on 9 March 2006 (Thursday) and fully inaugurated on 8 March 2007 (Thursday).

**Resolution:** The World Health Organization (WHO) adopted its first-ever resolution on kidney health during the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) held from 19–27 May 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland, marking a major milestone in recognizing kidney disease as a global public health priority.

**International Day of Mathematics 2026 – March 14**

International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is observed annually across the world on 14 **March** to highlight the importance of mathematics in fields such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), climate change, energy, and sustainable development.

- 14 March 2026 marks the **7th** observance of the IDM.
- **2026 Theme:** “Mathematics and Hope”.

**Background:**

**UNESCO Proclamation:** The 40th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November **2019** proclaimed 14 March as the IDM through Resolution 40C/30.

- The first IDM was celebrated on **14 March 2020**.

**Organising Bodies:** The International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is coordinated by UNESCO’s International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP) and the International Mathematical Union (IMU) with support from several international and regional organisations.

**Observance in India:** India observes National Mathematics Day annually on 22 December to commemorate the birth anniversary of renowned mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.

**World Consumer Rights Day 2026 – March 15**

World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed annually across the world on 15 March to promote awareness of consumer rights, protection, and empowerment, ensuring ethical practices and informed choices.

- **2026 Theme:** “Safe products, confident consumers”

**Background:**

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**Origin:** WCRD was inspired by a message from **John F. Kennedy**, former President of the United States of America(USA), to the US Congress on 15 March 1962.

**First Observance:** The first WCRD was observed on **15 March 1983**.

**Global Recognition:** WCRD is globally recognized and supported by organizations like the United Nations(UN) and other international bodies, promoting consumer rights worldwide.

### **International Day of Happiness 2026 – March 20**

The United Nations (UN's) **International Day of Happiness** is observed annually across the globe on **20 March** to emphasize the importance of happiness and well-being as essential components of human life and public policy.

- **2026 Theme:** “Caring and Sharing”

#### **Background:**

**UN Resolution:** In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/66/281, officially declaring March 20 as the International Day of Happiness with support from all 193 member states.

**First Observance:** The first International Day of Happiness was celebrated on 20 March 2013.

**2026 Report:** The World Happiness Report (WHR) 2026 was released on 20 March 2026 by the Wellbeing Research Centre (WRC), University of Oxford (UK) in partnership with Gallup Inc (GI) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN).

- For the ninth year in a row Finland secured 1st place and India ranked 116th.

### **World Sparrow Day 2026 – March 20**

World Sparrow Day (**WSD**) is observed globally on **March 20** each year to highlight the alarming decline in sparrow populations, especially the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), and to encourage efforts toward their conservation and the protection of urban biodiversity.

- **20 March 2026** marks the **17th observance** of the WSD.
- **2026 Theme:** “Creating Bird-Friendly Cities & Communities”

#### **Background:**

**Origin:** WSD was initiated by the Nature Forever Society (NFS), founded by Mohammed Dilawar, in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France).

- Mohammed Dilawar was named a “Heroes of the Environment” awardee by TIME Magazine in 2008 for his conservation work.

**First Observance:** The first WSD was celebrated on 20 March 2010.

### **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2026 – March 21**

The United Nations (UN) observes the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination annually on 21 March to raise awareness about racism, racial discrimination, and the challenges faced by people of African descent and other affected communities.

- 2026 marked the 61st anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Racial of Discrimination (**ICERD**).

**Background:**

**Adoption:** On 26 October **1966**, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/2142 (XXI), titled “Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,” declaring 21 March as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

**First Observance:** The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was first observed on **21 March 1967**.

**International Nowruz Day 2026 – March 21**

The United Nations (UN’s) **International Nowruz Day** is observed annually across the world on **21 March** to promote cultural exchange, peace, solidarity, and good neighbourliness.

**Background:**

**UN Resolution:** On 23 February **2010**, the UNGA adopted Resolution A/RES/64/253, officially declaring 21 March as International Nowruz Day.

**First Celebration:** The inaugural International Nowruz Day was celebrated on **21 March 2010**.

**UNESCO Recognition:** Nowruz was inscribed on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.

**World Poetry Day 2026 – March 21**

The United Nations (UN) observed **World Poetry Day** every year across the world on **21 March** to promote linguistic diversity and support endangered languages through poetry.

- 21 March 2026 marks the observance of the **27th** World Poetry Day.
- **2026 Theme:** “Poetry as a Bridge for Peace and Inclusion”

**Background:**

**UNESCO Proclamation:** In 1999, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed 21 March (first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere) as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris, France.

**First Observance:** The first World Poetry Day was observed on **21 March 2000**.

**International Day of Forests 2026 – March 21**

The United Nations (UN’s) **International Day of Forests (IDF)** is observed annually across the globe on **March 21** to celebrate all types of forests and raise global awareness about their importance and the need to protect them.

- 21 March 2026 marks the **14th** observance of IDF
- **Theme 2026:** “Forests and Economies.”

**Background:**

**Proclamation:** The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed March 21 as IDF through Resolution A/RES/67/200 on December 21, **2012**.

**First:** The first IDF was observed on **March 21, 2013**.

**Organization:** IDF is organized annually by the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of UN in collaboration with global partners.

### **World Tuberculosis Day 2026 – March 24**

World Tuberculosis Day (WTD) is observed annually across the globe on **24 March** every year to raise awareness about **Tuberculosis (TB)**, a preventable and curable infectious disease, and to accelerate efforts toward its elimination.

- **2026 Theme:** “Yes! We Can End TB! Led by Countries, Powered by People”

#### **Background:**

**Proposal:** In 1982, on the centenary of Koch’s discovery, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD) and the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed designating **24 March** as World TB Day under the campaign “Defeat TB: Now and Forever.”

**Observance:** The first official World TB Day was observed on **24 March 1983**.

#### **2026 Events in India:**

**Event:** A national-level WTD 2026 event was presided over by **Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda**, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), at Gautam Buddha University, Greater **Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP)**.

- During the event, Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda launched the ‘TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan – 100 Days Campaign,’ the TB Mukh Bharat Application(app), and the TB Mukh Urban Ward Initiative to accelerate case detection, improve treatment adherence, and strengthen TB services in high-burden areas.